

IMPACT PHILANTHROPY FY 26-27 FAIRFIELD COUNTY COMMUNITY CATALYST



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - Last Updated: 5/13/2026

The following questions have been asked about our Impact Philanthropy **Fairfield County Community Catalyst** grant opportunity:

Table of Contents

General	2
Alignment	4
Attachments	5
Organizational	5
Programmatic	5
Review Process	6
Reporting Requirements	7
Fiscal Sponsors	7
Payment/Fund Disbursement	7

New questions are highlighted in yellow

General

1. Who is eligible?

The following requirements must be met for an application to be considered for funding through the Impact Philanthropy **Community Catalyst** Grant Program. The organization:

- Must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization **OR** have a Fiscal Sponsor that has nonprofit status.
- Must have an **active and current registration** with the CT Secretary of State and the CT Department of Consumer Protection
- Mission/Program supports the UWCWC service area of **Fairfield County** (excluding Greenwich and Shelton)
- Serves **ALICE households**—those living at or below the ALICE Threshold, including Federal Poverty Level
- Is transforming systems, big or small, and/or building community power
- Demonstrates efforts within the **Civic Engagement spectrum**

2. Can emerging, grassroots, or first-time organizations apply—even without a full track record?

Yes, Emerging, grassroots, and first-time applicants are encouraged to apply. There is no requirement that organizations have a long history or prior funding experience. However, all applicants must either:

- Have 501(c)(3) status, or
- Apply with a fiscal sponsor that has nonprofit status

3. Does this grant prioritize grassroots or first-time applicants?

While grassroots and first-time applicants are encouraged to apply, there is no formal preference or restriction. Organizations of all sizes and experience levels are eligible.

4. Would a 501(c)(6) organization qualify for this grant, or would we need to apply through a 501(c)(3) partner or fiscal sponsor?

A 501(c)(6) organization would not be eligible to apply directly for this grant. Because the intent of these funds is to provide unrestricted support, we are not able to award funding to 501(c)(6) entities, which would require us to impose restrictions on how the funds are used.

However, you are welcome to apply through an eligible 501(c)(3) organization serving as a fiscal sponsor.

5. Can grassroots or volunteer-run groups apply?

Yes, grassroots and/or volunteer-run groups can apply. If your organization does not currently have an IRS 501(c)(3) status however, you will need a fiscal sponsor. Learn more about what a fiscal sponsor is [here](#).

Please note that UWCWC is unable to be the fiscal sponsor for organizations applying for a UWCWC grant.

6. What are examples of eligible expenses?

- Personnel (staff costs – including programmatic & operating)
- Equipment/supplies
- Technology/software
- Assistance to individuals
- Indirect costs (rent, utilities, other administrative expenses)
- Research and evaluation
- Professional conferences, development, fees and travel

7. **What's the average award typically given through this grant process? How many grants are usually given in a typical year? How many applicants do you typically have for this grant process?**

The average award last year was about \$10,000.

Last year we awarded 7 agencies funding through the Community Catalyst grant process.

Last year we had between 30-35 agencies apply for the Community Catalyst grant process.

This year we expect to award approximately 7-10 grants, with grant awards ranging from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

8. **How do I access the application portal, e-CImpact?**

Here is the direct link to UWCWC's e-CImpact grants management portal: <https://agency.e-cimpact.com/login.aspx?org=08090F>

If you have searched for e-CImpact through your internet browser, you will most likely land on the general login page which asks you for an Organization Code. This Org Code refers to UWCWC's instance of e-CImpact and is as follows: **08090F**. After entering this code, complete your Username and Password as you would normally.

If this is your first time registering for e-CImpact, please follow the Registration Instructions found by on the 'Grant Opportunities' page of our [website](#).

9. **Can I submit multiple applications?**

No, organizations can only submit one application for the Community Catalyst grant process. In addition, only one program can be added to the application.

10. **What is UWCWC's policy regarding using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assist in the grant writing process?**

UWCWC welcomes the use of AI tools to improve nonprofit efficiency and support the refinement of grant application materials. However, we've observed that AI can over generalize concepts, sometimes resulting in responses that do not capture the impact areas and categories key to our approach. We recommend organizations keep a human in the loop to ensure the application reflects your voice and verify that the information aligns with UWCWC's focus.

11. **If we have an emergency come up, are we able to ask for an extension to submit the application?**

Yes, but you must reach out to **Victoria Scofield at least five (5) business days** prior to the existing deadline. For this process, the final date to request an extension for emergency reasons is **Thursday, May 21, 2026**.

In an email to Victoria, please specify the reasons for the request and the proposed extension date. Please note that extensions can be no longer than 10 calendar days after the existing deadline. Written approval or denial of requests for extensions will be sent to the organization's primary contact via email.

12. **When will applicants be notified?**

The expected award notification date is currently **Friday, June 26, 2026**. The notification will come by email through the e-CImpact grant portal. Please be on the lookout for an email from: admin@ecimpact.com.

13. **What support is available to applicants?**

The Community Impact Team is responsible for implementing the Impact Philanthropy Grant program and is an important resource for organizations interested in applying. There are several ways to connect with us to get more information:

- **Impact Philanthropy Fairfield County Community Catalyst Grant Live Information Sessions:**
 - Find the session link in the "How to Apply" section of the NOFA.
 - A recording will be shared with all registrants and posted on [e-CImpact](#).
- **Friday Q & A Lunch Hours (During the application period):**
 - Every Friday from 12:00 – 1:00 pm (Fridays, May 8, 15, and 22, 2026)
 - Drop in anytime with questions – no set agenda; topics depend on participant inquiries.
 - [Teams Link for Lunch Hours](#) – Use this same link each Friday to join.
- **One-on-One Support:**

- Contact a member of the Community Impact Team via email (communityimpact@unitedwaycwc.org) or phone (203-883-6704).
- If unavailable, leave a voicemail – we'll respond within 48 hours

14. Is United Way the grant manager on this grant? Where do the funds come from?

United Way Coastal and Western Connecticut (UWCWC) is both the grant manager and the source of the funds; the awards come from United Way's unrestricted funding.

15. Can we apply for multiple United Way grants (Community Catalyst, Weaver, others)?

Yes. Organizations may apply for multiple UWCWC grant opportunities, as long as they meet each program's eligibility requirements.

16. Can we apply to both Community Catalyst and Weaver Awards?

Yes, if eligible. Note that Weaver Awards have additional restrictions, including a maximum organizational budget of \$250,000. For more information, please review the 'Weaver Award' section of our ['Grant Opportunities'](#) webpage.

17. Is the funding truly unrestricted? Can it support general operations?

Yes. Funds are unrestricted and may be used for general operating support or program costs, even if the use changes after the award due to organizational needs.

18. Do we have to apply for a specific program if the funding is unrestricted?

Yes. Applicants must identify a specific program or project for alignment and review purposes, even though the funds themselves are unrestricted.

19. What does the Connecticut registration requirements mean?

You must be registered with both the Connecticut Secretary of State and the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection to legally operate as a nonprofit in Connecticut.

Alignment

1. Is Community Catalyst civic engagement only? How is that different from community engagement?

Yes. Community Catalyst focuses on civic engagement (systems-level and individual civic participation), while a separate, upcoming grant will focus more broadly on community engagement and community building. For more information, please review the 'Weaver Awards' information found on our ['Grant Opportunities'](#) webpage.

2. Can civic engagement include one-on-one or group outreach (e.g., voter engagement)?

Yes. One-on-one, group-based, and community-based activities are eligible as long as they clearly align with civic engagement goals.

3. Do applicants need to create a new program to qualify?

No. Applicants are encouraged **not** to create entirely new programs just for this grant. Instead, you should:

- Build on existing work, and
- Highlight how it aligns with civic engagement priorities

4. Are programs serving children evaluated differently than those serving adults?

No. Applications are not evaluated differently based on the population served (youth vs. adults). All applications are reviewed using the same criteria, with emphasis on:

- Program alignment
- Impact
- Strength of the application

5. Do I need to address all civic engagement categories (e.g., leadership, advocacy, organizing, etc.)?

No. You only need to align with at least one area of the civic engagement spectrum. You do not need to address multiple categories.

6. How are “community organizing” and “leadership development” defined?

- **Community organizing:** Mobilizing people for action through grassroots movements; bringing people together to build relationships, create collective action, and support systems change.
- **Leadership development:** Training individuals to take on leadership roles for the public good; building skills and capacity in individuals (e.g., youth, community members, nonprofit leaders) to engage in civic or community leadership roles

7. Can I see examples of past funded organizations or projects?

A wide range of organizations have been funded, including:

- Voter engagement initiatives
- Community-building programs
- Small grassroots organizations

While a public list may not be available yet on our website, you can review the FY 2025-2026 Community Catalyst grantees [here](#). If you are unsure on fit, please reach out to a Community Impact Team member.

Attachments

1. What attachments, if any, are required?

There are two types of attachments required for this grant program: Organizational and Programmatic

Organizational

Required

- **Most recent Organization Annual Operating Budget** – We are looking for the total operating expenses for your organization for the fiscal year in whatever format or documentation you normally use. We are not looking for the budget for a project or program of your organization, even if you are hoping to apply for funding solely for that project or program.

Optional

- *(If available)* **Organization’s Most Recent Annual Report** – This will help give the reviewers a better understanding of your work.
- *(As needed)* **Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement** – Please submit a copy of the signed Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement between your Fiscal Sponsor and the Community-Based Organization.
- **Other Materials** – Please provide any additional materials that you feel will add to your application. Please submit these materials in a single PDF/Word document.

Programmatic

Required

- **Program/Project Budget** – For multi-year programs/projects, provide a full project budget and specify how this one-year grant will be used. For single-year projects, submit a budget outlining key expenses and funding sources.

Optional

- *(If applicable)* **Letters of Support from Partnerships** – Please submit these materials in a single PDF/Word document.
- **Other Materials** – Please provide any additional materials that you feel will add to your application. Please submit these materials in a single PDF/Word document.

2. If we apply for general operating funds, what should we provide for the Program Budget?

If you are applying for general operating funds, you will need to attach your operating budget twice:

- The first in its original form in *'Form 3: Organization Attachments'*.
- Second, in a form that shows your current plan for using the Community Catalyst funding, if awarded. You can use the Program Budget Template provided in the application materials or use your own format.

3. I see that Community Catalyst provides unrestricted funding yet you'd like a project/program budget. Do we apply for a town or can we apply for a specific program?

These funds are truly unrestricted; however, each grant process has a specific focus to guide funding decisions. To better understand your Catalyst program/project, we ask for a budget outlining how you currently anticipate using the requested funds. That said, once awarded, you have the flexibility to pivot these funds as needed.

Additionally, Catalyst grants do not have to be tied to one specific town or city unless that aligns with how your program/project operates.

4. Which budget should I submit if I'm applying with a fiscal sponsor?

You should submit your organizations or programs budget—**not the fiscal sponsor's budget**.

If your work is structured as a single program or project, you may need to submit that same budget in both:

- The organizational budget section
- The program/project budget section

5. Do I need to submit a program budget even if the funding is unrestricted or for general operations?

Yes. Even though the funding is unrestricted, all applications must include a program or project budget. This budget can:

- Reflect a specific initiative, **or**
- Show how funds will generally support your work within the grant priorities

6. Can grant funds be used for planning, startup, or program launch costs?

Yes. Grant funds can support planning, launching, and implementation as long as expenses occur within the grant period: **July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027**.

Review Process

1. What happens after I apply?

After you submit your application on e-CImpact or by email to communityimpact@unitedwaycwc.org, it will move through the following steps:

- Staff Technical Review** (about 1 week after the deadline)
United Way Community Impact (CI) staff will review your application to make sure all required information and documents are included. They will also complete basic eligibility checks (such as IRS status and state registrations).
- Committee Review**
Once the technical review is complete, your application will be shared with the Review Committee. Committee members will evaluate applications and develop funding recommendations.
- Board Approval**
Funding recommendations are then submitted to the UWCWC Board of Directors for final approval. After the Board makes its decision, applicants will be notified. We expect this notification to be shared by Friday, June 26, 2026

2. Who reviews the applications?

Applications are reviewed by a committee of community volunteers and partners who bring a range of lived and professional experiences to the process. Our committee members often include individuals from nonprofit organizations, community leaders, UW staff, and others with a strong understanding of local needs and priorities.

We intentionally build committees that reflect the diversity of the communities we serve and value perspectives from those who are closely connected to the issues addressed by the funding.

All reviewers receive training, guidance, and a shared rubric to support a thoughtful, consistent, and equitable review process.

Reporting Requirements

1. What will the reporting requirements for the Community Catalyst grants be if awarded funding?

There will be two reports due for both grants: a mid-year check-in/site visit and a year-end written report.

- a. **Mid-Year Check-In/Site Visits** – Completed during the months of January and February 2027
 - i. A 30- to 45-minute check-in with UWCWC staff to learn more about your work.
- b. **Year-End Report** – Due July 15, 2027
 - i. Partners will provide information and updates on the following components:
 1. Program/organization results (people and communities served; comments on successes, challenges, and learning experienced.)
 2. Comments on capacity build, if any
 3. Reflection on the past year
 4. At least one success story
 5. Demographic information on participants served, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, income level, etc.

Fiscal Sponsors

1. Who can be a Fiscal Sponsor?

Any organization or business that meets the eligibility requirements for a UWCWC grant. **UWCWC cannot be the fiscal sponsor for organizations applying for a UWCWC grant.** An organization does not need a fiscal sponsor if they already have 501(c)(3) nonprofit status.

2. What does a Fiscal Sponsor do?

The fiscal sponsor is a third-party organization that handles various financial and administrative duties on behalf of another organization or collaborative. The fiscal sponsor assumes financial and legal responsibility of the funds/project, receiving and distributing funds to the project team. Using a fiscal sponsorship arrangement offers a way for a cause to attract donors even when it is not yet recognized as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). In essence, the fiscal sponsor serves as the administrative “home” of the cause.

The exact division of tasks between the grantee and fiscal sponsor should be agreed upon after reviewing the grant process NOFA and acknowledging a mutual understanding of each other’s responsibilities

3. Are there any additional documents required when applying under or as a Fiscal Sponsor?

Organizations choosing to work with a fiscal sponsor will be required to submit a copy of their signed fiscal sponsorship agreement.

4. Do fiscal sponsors need to align with the grant’s civic engagement focus?

No, fiscal sponsors are not required to align with the specific focus of the grant. However, it is generally recommended that you choose a fiscal sponsor with some mission alignment to your work.

5. Can I use a community organization (like a community center) as a fiscal sponsor?

Yes, as long as the organization:

- Has 501(c)(3) status, and
- Is willing to act as your fiscal sponsor

Payment/Fund Disbursement

1. What is the grant agreement process like?

If the organization is selected for a UWCWC Grant – either partially or fully – the organization will receive an official Funding Letter, Grant Guidelines, and Grant Agreement.

By executing the Grant Agreement, the organization accepts all UWCWC funding as awarded in the Funding Letter. For the organization to receive the awarded funds, the organization must agree to all UWCWC requirements for the accepted funding, as outlined in the Grant Agreement. The Agreement must be signed and dated by the Organization's Executive Director/CEO/President or organizational authorized signatory (i.e. Chief Financial Officer). United Way uses the e-CImpact platform to distribute and execute the Agreements.

2. What if I need to make material (budget, outcome, etc.) changes due to the level of funding awarded or if the organization elects to decline funding?

In both cases please email Victoria Scofield at Victoria.scofield@unitedwaycwc.org as soon as possible after receiving your Funding Letter. The email should outline the reasons for changes or declined funding.

3. How will grant awards be disbursed? In one lump sum or installments?

By default, we will pay our Impact Philanthropy grants in quarterly payments, unless you receive less than \$5,000 in grant funds. Organizations that receive less than \$5K in grant funds will receive one lump sum payment at the beginning of the funding period.

4. When does UWCWC typically send out award installments?

Since we pay out the Impact Philanthropy grants in quarterly payments, the typical installment timeline is as follows:

Installment	Timeline
First – Quarter 1 *	July or August 2026 **
Second – Quarter 2	October 2026
Third – Quarter 3	January 2027
Fourth – Quarter 4	April 2027

**Note agencies that are awarded \$5,000 or less will be paid in full in the First Installment.*

***The First Installment payment date may vary depending on when we receive all required grant agreement documents from your organization.*

5. What payment options do we have to receive UWCWC funding?

All organizations that receive UWCWC funding have two payment options to choose from:

- Electronic Funds Transfer (deposit directly into a bank account)
 - If an organization chooses this option, they will have to complete our Authorization Agreement for receiving Automatic Deposits (ACH) Form **and** provide a copy of either a Voided Check **or** a Bank Verification Letter.

OR

- Check

Both payment options will also require the organization to complete a W9 Form.

Previously funded by UWCWC? You may not have to provide these payment documents again. To see what we have on file for your organization, please review the e-CImpact 'Compliance' section. Contact Victoria Scofield if you have any questions.

Applying with a Fiscal Sponsor? Please have your Fiscal Sponsor submit the payment documents. They will also need to co-sign the Grant Agreement in e-CImpact.