



The Wabash Valley is made up of problem solvers, difference makers, and opportunity creators.

Together, we're on a mission to change lives forever in our community by investing in programs focused on our BOLD GOAL!

**United Way
of the Wabash Valley**



**Move 10,000 families
out of financial
struggles and into
stability!**

United Way of the Wabash Valley, Inc. Collective Impact Grant Opportunity Announcement *Request for Proposals*

Issuing Impact Council: **Job Skills**

The Job Skills Impact Council uses a collective impact methodology to improve work-ready job skills in order to create a positive economic impact for our community. We believe that by increasing job skills quality, availability, and soft skills, we can help break the cycle of generational poverty and bring more households to financial stability. Learn more about this council at <https://uwwwv.org/job-skills/>.



Grant Title:	Wabash Valley Learn to Earn
Announcement Date:	November 2023
Fiscal Year Funding:	2024-2025

Contained in this document is the grant overview, schedule, application requirements, and instructions to provide a proposal to United Way of the Wabash Valley, Inc.

Overview of Funding Opportunity

Community Impact Goal

United Way of the Wabash Valley (UWWV) works with and for our community to create lasting solutions to our greatest challenges. We envision a thriving, inspired community focused on care and collaboration. We pursue this by convening the community to address key issues, collaborating to achieve a measurable impact, and connecting human and financial resources to improve lives.

In the United Way service area (Clay, Parke, Sullivan, Vermillion and Vigo Counties in Indiana and Clark County in Illinois), more than 33,000 households live below a bare bones financial income referred to as ALICE (see www.uwwv.org/ALICE). *UWWV is working toward a long-term bold goal for the community of moving 10,000 households out of financial struggles and into stability.* We invite applicants to propose initiatives that will help us reach that goal.

Issue Background

Stable, living-wage employment is essential for helping ALICE families improve their economic circumstances. At a time when employers report having job opportunities available, one may easily assume that it's simple for workers to find and keep the living wage employment they need. Unfortunately, data shows that in our region, both urban and rural, people of prime working age are struggling with unemployment or underemployment.

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) has identified our region as a "distressed community." The region's total labor force in 2021 stood at nearly 113,000 people, with 3.6 percent of them, or around 4,100 people, unemployed. The lowest unemployment rates are seen in Parke County, with Vigo coming in the highest at more than 4 percent. Across West Central Indiana, the labor force participation rate is 58.6 percent, roughly five points below the state and national rates. Roughly 27 percent of the prime age (25-54) population is not employed, either because they are not participating in the workforce or because they cannot secure employment, 5 to 6 points higher than the national and state levels. That number jumps even higher, to 36 percent, in Parke and Sullivan counties. (THRIVE West Central CEDS 2023-2027)

There is no single explanation for our area's high prime-age employment gap. We know there are barriers to sustained employment such as lack of childcare, lack of transportation, and lack of affordable housing which prevent our workers from getting or keeping a good, stable job. In addition to barriers to employment, we also face a lack of job skills. Ready Indiana, an initiative of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, recently published a survey of 335 employers, stating they believe 71 percent of employees lack "applied skills" such as problem-solving, communication, work ethic, and professionalism. The employers also estimated that 35 percent of employees lack computer-related skills and 25 percent require on-the-job training. On top of that, many of today's workers lack "soft skills," such as how to interview for a job, prepare a resume, or even show up for work on time. All of these factors help create the current situation we now face.

Grant Goals

The UWWV Job Skills Impact Council is soliciting proposals for services or programs that improve job skills for working-age (18-65) ALICE adults. Organizations eligible to apply include non-profit organizations, educational institutions, faith-based groups, government entities, and community organizations.

Proposed projects can take a variety of approaches to addressing job skills challenges in the UWWV service area. Potential programs include, but are not limited to those programs that:

- Connect individuals who have an employment barrier (people with disabilities, formerly incarcerated individuals, language barrier, etc.) with employers
- Facilitate transitional job opportunities for individuals that have been out of the workforce
- Help remove structural barriers, such as transportation to employment
- Provide individuals with life/career coaching and mentorship for job attainment and retention (time management, financial literacy, resume writing, computer skills, conflict resolution, etc.)
- Connect individuals with low-cost, high-quality training and mentorship for high-demand jobs

Priority will be given to programs that demonstrate direct collaboration and engagement with local employers. Priority also will be given to programs that take a holistic approach to job/life skills development as ALICE individuals experience a myriad of challenges in seeking and keeping employment.

Grant Funding Available

The UWWV Job Skills Impact Council has made available up to \$50,000 to be provided over 2 years from grant start date. Applicants will be allowed to apply for a minimum of \$ 10,000 up to a maximum of \$50,000 for investment in 2024-2025.

Grant Required Outputs/Outcomes

United Way of the Wabash Valley is committed to bringing our community together to pursue a bold goal to move 10,000 households out of financial struggles and into stability. The organization will use the biennially produced ALICE Project report to measure progress toward this long-term outcome. For its part, the Job Skills Impact Council will measure contributing outcomes by tracking regional job participation rates and implementing an annual survey of local job skills quality level and availability. To contribute to success in these outcomes, this grant requires the following output:

Increase the number of individuals who learn about, are connected to, or engage in programs that improve job skills or for working-age (18-65) ALICE adults

Grant Timeline

There are no exceptions to any deadlines for the applicant; however, UWWV reserves the right to change the dates with proper communication to potential applicants. All times provided are in Eastern Time.

Milestone Activity	Date
Grant announcement. Solicitation for required Letter of Intent (LOI)	November 1, 2023
LOI and Stewardship Package Meeting. Organizations interested in submitting an LOI are required to attend. RSVP to Michele Bennett at 812.235.6287 or mbennett@uwwv.org.	November 28, 2023 at 5:30 pm ET
LOI is due electronically via e-CImpact to UWWV by 4:00 pm ET	January 15, 2024
Notification of application status. Only approved submissions will proceed beyond this point.	January 22, 2024
Important meeting for online application orientation and training. RSVP to Dorothy Chambers at 812.235.6287 or dchambers@uwwv.org.	January 29, 2024 at 5:30 pm ET

Grant application period	January 29, 2024- March 11, 2024
Full application electronic submission is due to the UWWV by 4:00 pm ET	March 11, 2024
Review of applications	March 11, 2024- April 5, 2024
Notification of awards	May 1, 2024
Funding period begins	May 2024

Eligibility

Eligibility to apply for this funding opportunity will be based upon an initial review of eligible applicants and their submitted Letter of Intent and Stewardship Documentation Checklist.

Eligible Applicants

United Way of the Wabash Valley Job Skills Impact Council (UWWV JS) invites applications from:

1. nonprofit organizations
2. a unit or agency of local government
3. faith-based and community-based organizations
4. educational institutions

The entity must be based in or operating a facility or programs in Clay, Parke, Sullivan, Vermillion or Vigo Counties in Indiana or in Clark County, Illinois.

Letter of Intent (LOI)

All applicants must submit an online Letter of Intent (LOI) indicating their interest in this funding opportunity. These letters will be used to narrow the field of applicants to a reasonable number who will be asked to submit a full proposal. Organizations are **required** to attend the LOI and Stewardship Package meeting either virtually or in person.

The LOI will provide the following information:

- the name and address of the applying organization, contact information, and confirmation of tax status.
- a description of the proposed project and project goals.
- a description of how the proposed project fits the organization's mission and goals.
- the amount of funding being requested, the intended use of the funds, and a brief description of how the funds will help the project achieve the outputs/outcomes listed for this grant opportunity. The amount requested in the LOI is not binding but should be a reasonable estimate and will be used in evaluating the LOI. If the project is selected for a full application, the budget can be adjusted as supported in the application.

Stewardship Package Requirements

A Stewardship Documentation Checklist will be provided and reviewed at the required LOI and Stewardship Package meeting listed in the grant timeline. Minimum criteria for organizations to apply for grant funding will be included on this checklist and include, but are not limited to the following:

- Current fiscal year budget for the applying organization
- Proof of financial oversight/organization's financial review
- Board of directors roster and recent board meeting minutes (as applicable)
- Stated policies of nondiscrimination and compliance with all the requirements of state and federal laws and regulation on nondiscrimination and equal opportunity
- Certified compliance with U.S. Patriot Act including recommended counterterrorism measures
- IRS Determination Letter

Application Content

Application Overview

UWWV uses Seabrook's e-CImpact™ Grant Management Community Impact Software system for submission and review of issued funding opportunities. The grant application will require the following content to be completed and submitted online by the applicant.

- a. Applicant Organization General Information
- b. Program/Initiative Proposal General Information
- c. Project Narrative (*see explanation below*)
- d. Project Workplan (*see explanation below*)
- e. Project Budget and Budget Narrative (*see explanation below*)
- f. Additional Documents (*at discretion of applicant*)

Items *a - c* will be a series of online forms and text boxes; items *d - f* will be PDF attachments to be uploaded to the online application. The following instructions provide details for the completion of each section of the proposal.

Project Narrative

The Wabash Valley Learn and Earn seeks qualified applicants that will use innovative ways to help individuals overcome job skills challenges and pursue job and life-skills development. The project narrative should provide a simple but detailed description of what the applicant is intending to do with this grant money. The narrative should also describe how the funds will help the program achieve the required outputs/outcomes referred to in this Request for Proposals.

Project Workplan

The applicant shall develop a detailed work plan that will outline all activities described in the project narrative. The workplan should be laid out as a table and contain the following minimum elements:

- **Activities:** All activities should be included in the workplan as line items.
- **Responsible Party:** For each activity in the workplan, identify the organization and/or staff member responsible and/or involved in the activity.
- **Timeline:** Outline the specific time period, with start dates and end dates, during which each activity will occur.

The workplan should contain all required elements to fully implement the proposed program and achieve the required outputs/outcomes including key meetings, development time, identified milestones, reporting requirements, target outputs/outcomes achieved, etc.

Project Budget & Budget Narrative

The Project Budget and Budget Narrative should be combined into a single document. The applicant may choose the format, making sure the financial content and associated narrative explanations are easy to review and understand.

The budget should provide the details for each budget line item for the proposal, listing the total cost of each with the associated narrative explaining how such items were calculated. For example, costs for personnel should show the annual salary rate and the percentage of time devoted to the project for each employee that may be paid with grant funding. The budget should present—as completely as possible—an itemization of all proposed costs for the length of the project.

If the applicant is requesting funding to support or expand an existing program, the budget narrative should include details on how the funds will be used, and the budget should represent the entire program as well as highlight the use of the grant funding.

Finally, the budget narrative should also provide details on how the budget will allow for sustainability of the program.

Selection Criteria

UWWV's *Investment Strategies and Partnership Requirements Manual* provides a description and additional insight to the Standardized Grant Process. The manual is available at www.uwwv.org/how-we-invest.

UWWV staff members do not make selection decisions for grant applications. Rather, UWWV recruits volunteers to participate in the evaluation process. As the manual describes, volunteers are trained to use the “Best Investment Criteria” as they review applications and make their decisions. “Best Investment Criteria” refer to the programs that most clearly demonstrate:

- **ALIGNMENT:** Connection between program goals, UWWV Impact Council metric(s), and the Bold Goal for our community.
- **IMPACT:** Effectiveness of programming as reflected by evaluation efforts and evidence-based outcomes
- **RESOURCES:** Access to the resources (staff, experience, financial, etc.) to successfully implement the program

The following additional criteria are not required items but are recommended in order to allow applicants to enhance their submission based on these most basic evaluation criteria.

Organizational Capacity

- The applicant organization has provided a clear explanation of its mission, vision, and goals.
- The applicant organization's budget is consistent in terms of past, current, and proposed fiscal years, and acceptable accounting practices are used.
- The applicant organization possesses the staff, space, equipment, and general organizational capacity to implement the outcomes.

- The applicant organization demonstrates the knowledge required to successfully provide programs of the quality proposed in this initiative through past experience or existing programs.
- Evidence of community engagement and partnerships is preferred.

Achieving Results/Program Evaluation

- The application clearly describes how the new program will be evaluated for effectiveness.
- The application confirms how results data will be collected and reported.

Program Budget & Expenditure Detail

- If the program currently exists, the application adequately describes current funding sources.
- The grant request amount seems adequate to support the proposed initiative/program.
- The application adequately describes how the requested grant funding will be used.

Sustainability

- The application describes a plan to ensure the sustainability of the program after the grant period ends and funds have been expended.
- The application includes information on additional resources or community partnerships that could be drawn upon, if necessary, to ensure sustainability.

Application Instructions & Guidance

All applicants are encouraged to review the “Standardized Grant Process” section (p. 19) of the *UWWV Investment Strategies and Partnership Requirements Manual* (www.uwwv.org/how-we-invest). The manual provides key details on selection criteria for submitted applications.

IMPORTANT: UWWV awards full requests only; partial funding will not be considered. Because of this, it is important that applicants request exactly what is needed. For example, applicants should not request \$15,000, expecting to receive \$10,000 in funding; this could disqualify a proposal from consideration.

The UWWV Community Impact Manager is the primary point of contact during the application process, from the issue date of the RFP until selection of the successful applicant(s). The Community Impact Manager for this RFP is:

Dorothy Chambers
100 S. 7th Street, Terre Haute, IN 47807
812.235.6287
dchambers@uwwv.org

From the issue date of this RFP until announcement of the successful applicant(s), all questions, requests for clarification, and suggested changes may be addressed only to UWWV staff. UWWV assumes no responsibility for verbal representations made by its officers or employees unless such representations are confirmed in writing (electronic accepted). In addition, the UWWV written responses to questions will not be considered part of the RFP.

UWWV reserves the right to amend or provide clarifications to the RFP at any time. If the amendment occurs after the closing date for receipt of applications, UWWV may, in its sole discretion, allow applicants to amend their applications.

UWWV may request clarification from applicants in order to resolve ambiguities or question information presented in the applications. Clarifications may occur throughout the application review process.

Clarification responses shall be in writing (electronic accepted) and shall address only the information requested. Responses shall be submitted to UWWV within the time stipulated with the request.

UWWV acknowledges that selected applicant(s) may contract with third parties for the performance of any of the applicant's obligations. The UWWV reserves the right to provide prior approval for any subcontractor used to perform services under any contract that may result from this RFP.

The application shall be received by the UWWV Community Impact Staff by the time and date specified in the grant timeline. The UWWV will not waive this requirement. Any application received after this deadline will not be considered. Applications must be submitted online through e-CImpact. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application is received online prior to the deadline.

All programs that are awarded funding through any collective impact grant issued from any UWWV impact council will be required to sign a grant recipient agreement. This agreement will confirm that grant recipients understand all stipulations and requirements of the grant, in order to receive the full designated funding over the grant period. Failure to abide by the stipulations of the grant recipient agreement will result in forfeiture of remaining funds and may prevent the organization from applying for future funds. An example of a grant recipient agreement is included as Attachment E in the *UWWV Investment Strategies and Partnership Requirements Manual*.