



United Way of the  
Columbia-Willamette



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## Catalyst Fund Guidelines

### **Overview:**

The Catalyst Fund is designed to give United Way of the Columbia-Willamette the ability to make responsive, one-time investments to strengthen the systems and networks which support communities in our region.

### **Investment Guidelines:**

We seek to invest in efforts that initiate or improve systems, network capacity or collaborations within Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties in Oregon and Clark County in SW Washington. These funds are designed to initiate or strengthen an effort or to raise awareness of an issue that helps to reduce childhood poverty by diminishing educational, economic or health disparities in underserved communities in alignment with UWCW's strategic goals: *Successful Students, Stable Families and Connected Communities*.

We seek to do this with an intentional focus on three areas:

**Advancing racial equity:** Catalyst Fund applications must be able to identify how the proposed project or effort will advance racial equity. UWCW believes it is the foundation of the work we do and the lens with which we see the work.

**Help identify upstream involvement opportunities:** Strong applications should include discussion around how the effort or project is supporting individual and/or systemic advocacy in an effort to improve systems and eliminate barriers.

**Continuous quality improvement and knowledge building:** Project supports opportunities for learnings that can be applied to continuous quality improvement efforts and knowledge building.

In summary, awards will be made for projects or efforts which seek to positively impact their community by advancing racial equity through at least one of the following:

- Supporting individual and/or systemic advocacy
- Improving networks'/systems' effectiveness in supporting communities
- Supporting opportunities for knowledge building

Other elements of a strong proposal:

- Demonstrated partnerships for collaboration or clearly articulated strategies to develop such partnerships
- Community driven process (i.e. the problem and need has been identified by the community served and involves them in the process toward solution)
- Incorporates a population or systems-level approach rather than individual services.
- Has clear proposed or expected outcomes.



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We encourage applications at any stage in the project process. If you are thinking of applying for planning funds, please be clear about planning outcomes and next steps.

Awards will **NOT** be made to/for:

- An on-going program within an organization
- Operational capacity funds that further only a single organization's work
- Fundraising events or table sponsorships
- Scholarships or specific assistance to individuals

Note that community events that are not fundraisers are eligible to apply but will not be prioritized when the process is competitive. If you are thinking of applying for an event, please consider the timeframe and option to apply for a Community Event Sponsorship ([link](#)).

**Award Range:** Up to \$5,000 per application

**Eligibility:**

- Requests may come from any nonprofit, government or public organization (or fiscal sponsor) serving Clackamas, Multnomah or Washington counties in Oregon and/or Clark County in Washington.
- UWCW will make investments in efforts or projects that are working towards reducing childhood poverty through one or more of UWCW's strategic goals:
  - *Successful Students:* Every child thrives in school, meets benchmarks and graduations high school ready for college or career
  - *Stable Families:* Families have basic needs met, have stable housing, income and equitable access to resources
  - *Connected Communities:* Communities have deepened engagement and strengthened fabrics of support
- Organizations involved in the effort or project do not need to submit financial reviews or audits to apply

**IMPORTANT:** Please note that organizations currently funded by UWCW through Community Strengthening or Community Transformation do not qualify for this opportunity.

**How to Apply:**

- Eligible organizations may submit one request per fiscal year.
- Requests are twice per fiscal year (see review cycles below) at <http://www.unitedway-pdx.org/catalyst-fund-grant-opportunities>

The Catalyst Fund will be disbursed equally throughout the year, with requests reviewed and awarded by an internal committee twice a year (approximately \$25,000 to be awarded per review session)



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**Note:** In rare cases, the Internal Review Committee may select to roll an application over to a subsequent review month (For example, an application submitted for review in January may be rolled over for review in March).

**Reporting:**

Submit a letter focusing on project success, opportunities, and next steps. The letter should be no more than 2 pages. The project must be completed and report submitted no more than six months following the award. Timeliness of reporting will affect future funding decisions.

**If after reading through the investment guidelines, the applicant determines the Catalyst Fund does not meet the need for which they are applying, please consider the following opportunities:**

Ford Foundation: [www.fordfoundation.org](http://www.fordfoundation.org)

Community Foundation of Southwest Washington: [www.cfsww.org](http://www.cfsww.org)

Oregon Community Foundation: [www.oregoncf.org](http://www.oregoncf.org)

Meyer Memorial Trust: [www.mmt.org](http://www.mmt.org)

Northwest Health Foundation: [www.northwesthealth.org](http://www.northwesthealth.org)

Spirit Mountain Community Fund: [www.thecommunityfund.com](http://www.thecommunityfund.com)

Black United Fund of Oregon: [www.bufor.org](http://www.bufor.org)

Women's Foundation of Oregon: <https://womensfoundationoforegon.org/>