

# 2026-2027 GRANT APPLICATION INFORMATION SESSION

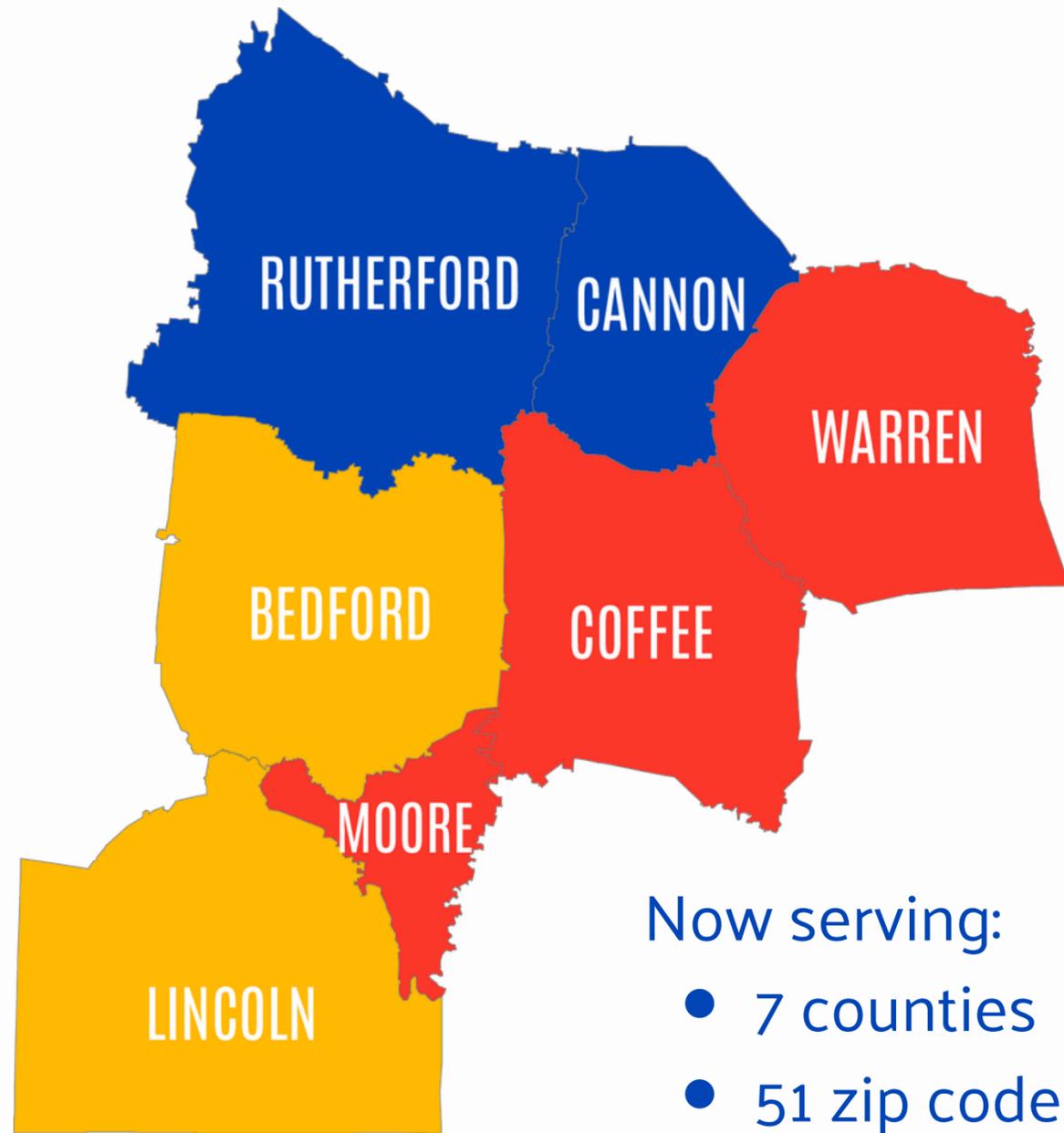


**UNITED WAY**  
South Central  
Tennessee

# AGENDA

- **About UWSCTN and our funding priorities**
- **Grant Programs Overview**
- **Application Process & Timeline**
- **Review & Selection Process**
- **Reporting & Evaluation**
- **Tips for Success**
- **Q&A**

# BUILDING A THRIVING COMMUNITY FOR ALL



- Now serving:
- 7 counties
  - 51 zip codes



## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**14** conversations  
across the region

over  
**100** participants representing  
all seven counties

Represented voices:  
General community,  
nonprofits, business,  
healthcare, education,  
faith-based, UW staff and  
board, consumers of  
services

## UNIVERSAL THEMES

- Affordable housing & homelessness
- Healthcare access barriers
- Childcare accessibility gaps
- Economic instability
- Need for collaboration

## DATA THAT VALIDATES COMMUNITY VOICE

- 244,000+ people (45% of all households) struggle to afford basic needs
- Range by county: 36% (Moore) to 55% (Cannon) of households
- 68-90% of single mothers below ALICE threshold in every county
- Required income for survival: \$40K-\$63K annually for one parent, one child

# WHO IS ALICE

## ASSET LIMITED, INCOME CONSTRAINED, AND EMPLOYED

45% OF HOUSEHOLDS IN OUR REGION ARE UNDER THE ALICE THRESHOLD



### Asset Limited

ALICE has no safety net in time of crisis



### Income Constrained

ALICE's income falls short of essentials

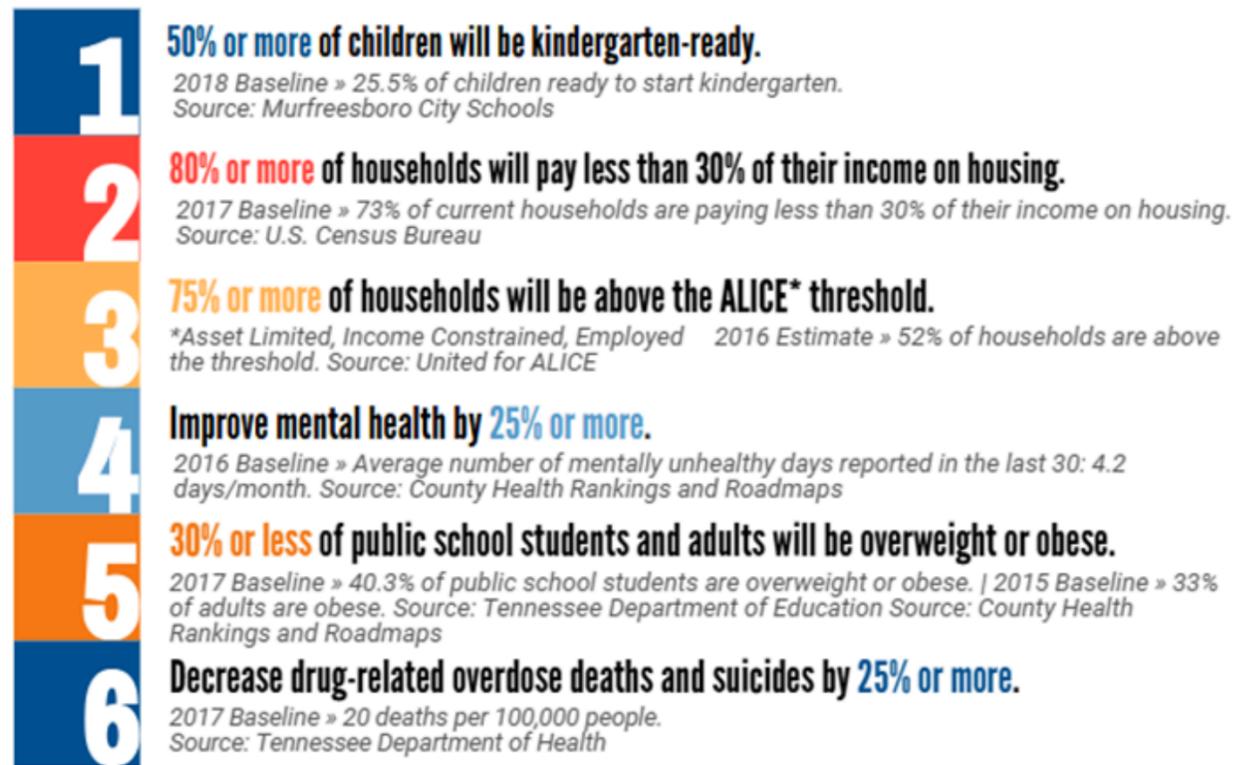


### Employed

ALICE is working, yet not earning enough

# OUR FUNDING PRIORITIES

Programs that help ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed) families achieve long-term stability and the ability to thrive.



## Areas of Impact

United Way grants support programs that serve ALICE households across one or more of these critical need areas:

- Housing & Shelter
- Utilities & Technology
- Child Care & Education
- Food
- Transportation
- Health Care

We will prioritize evidence-based programs, collaborative approaches, and organizations that address gaps in services in our region.

# GRANT PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

## Community Investment Grants

Funding Level: \$10,000 or more  
(average award in 2025: \$26,000)

- Programs with significant impact potential.
- Require a comprehensive application and a robust evaluation plan with shared measurements.

Best suited for: Programs with larger budgets, proven track records, and comprehensive data collection systems.

## Opportunity Grants

Funding Level: Up to \$9,999  
(average award in 2025: \$3,000)

- Smaller-scale programs addressing critical needs in our community.
- Streamlined application with basic goals and outcomes.

Best suited for: Programs with smaller budgets or emerging initiatives..

## Thriving Community Collaborative Grants

Funding Amount: up to \$20,000

For innovative services delivered at the Resource Center at Mitchell-Neilson Elementary that work in coordination with United Way staff and partners.

Requires quarterly coordination meetings, shared data collection, and a commitment to working together.

# THRIVING COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE GRANTS

## Who Should Apply:

- Programs addressing service gaps at Mitchell-Neilson (youth development, health services, financial empowerment, transportation, early childhood, adult education, food security, community building)
- Organizations ready to deliver services on-site at the Resource Center
- Providers committed to true collaboration, not just coexistence

## What We're Building: A coordinated network of services in one of our highest-need neighborhoods:

- 98% free/reduced lunch eligibility
- 57% of households below ALICE threshold
- Families working hard but facing barriers to stability



## APPLICATION PROCESS & TIMELINE



- All applications available at [yourlocaluw.org/grants](http://yourlocaluw.org/grants)
- Required attachments:
  - Program Budget Template
  - Patriot Act Form
  - Partnership Agreement
  - Financial Documents OR an up-to-date Giving Matters profile
  - Up-to-date 211 page

# REVIEW & SELECTION PROCESS

## Application Review

- Case for Funding: Compelling need, ALICE alignment, addressing service gaps
- Overall Strength of Program Design: Activities, evidence of success, collaboration
- Effective Use & Impact of Funding: Budget alignment, sustainability
- Project Impact & Evaluation: Goals, outcomes, and measurement plan

## Funding Priorities

United Way prioritizes programs that:

- Demonstrate strong collaborative partnerships
- Address clear gaps in services across our region
- Serve ALICE households with evidence-based approaches that build long-term stability and ability to thrive

**Notifications are made in mid-June. Funding cycle begins July 1.**

# COMMUNITY INVESTMENT GRANTS RATING FACTORS

This rubric uses a weighted scoring system. Factors marked with \*\* are assigned a higher point value and contribute more significantly to the overall score.

## Case for Funding

1. Statement of need is compelling, uses current data, and clearly defines the priority population.
2. Program directly addresses barriers faced by ALICE households and aligns with selected ALICE need categories.\*\*
3. Gap in services is clearly defined and substantiated with data; approach is innovative or clearly distinguished from others.

## Overall Strength of Program Design

4. Program activities, timeline, and implementation plan are clearly described and feasible for the grant cycle.\*\*
5. Program demonstrates evidence of success (existing programs) or alignment with best practices (new programs).
6. Collaboration strategy strengthens program delivery with clear roles, partnerships, or multi-agency coordination.\*\*

## Effective Use and Impact of Funding

7. Program has a clear, consistent, and reasonable budget.
8. Use of United Way funds is specific and well-justified with diverse revenue sources supporting implementation.\*\*
9. Geographic distribution and target number served are clearly defined and realistic for program scope.

## Project Impact and Evaluation

10. Program goals and outcomes are clear, measurable, and achievable.\*\*
11. Selected shared measurements align logically with program outcomes; targets are ambitious yet realistic.
12. Evaluation plan demonstrates appropriate systems for collecting and tracking data throughout the funding cycle.

## Overall

13. Overall, the program narrative, budget, and evaluation plan demonstrate strong likelihood of program success if funded.\*\*
14. The applicant has the organizational capacity and experience to successfully deliver this program.



# REPORTING & EVALUATION

## Community Investment Grants

- Quarterly Reports: Due in October 2026, January 2027 and April 2027
- Final Reports: Due July 2027

Reports include progress on program goals, selected shared measurements, budget updates, success stories, and any challenges encountered

## Opportunity Grants

- Mid-Year Report: Due in January 2027
- Final Report: Due in July 2027

Reports include progress on program goals and outcomes, budget updates, success stories, and any challenges encountered

## Thriving Community Collaborative Grants

- Participation in developing shared measurements and data collection processes after awards are made
- Willingness to share information and coordinate services with other providers serving the same families

# SHARED MEASUREMENTS - COMMUNITY INVESTMENT GRANTS

## How much did we do? (Activity - choose 1-2)

- # of individuals served
- # of sessions/classes/activities provided
- # of families/households connected to wraparound services
- # of referrals made to partner organizations

## How well did we do it? (Quality - choose 1-2)

- % of participants who meet program engagement goals (as defined by your program)
- % of participants demonstrating improved knowledge/skills (via pre/post assessment)
- % of participants who report feeling supported and connected to resources
- % of participants engaged in identifying personal goals and taking steps toward achieving them

## Is anyone better off? (Impact - choose 1-2)

- % of participants who increase income or access to resources
- % of participants who achieve/maintain stability (housing, employment, health, etc.)
- % of participants who demonstrate improvement in assessment scores
- % of participants who report reduced barriers to accessing services
- % of participants who successfully complete their program goals
- % of individuals who report a positive change in behaviors

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [yourlocaluw.org/grants](https://yourlocaluw.org/grants)
  - Community Investment & Opportunity Grants Guide
  - Thriving Community Grants Guide
  - All necessary attachments
  - Rating Factors
  - Shared Measurements
- [United for ALICE](#)
- Virtual Information Session: An Introduction to ALICE
  - Wednesday, February 18 at 1 pm - [Register Here](#)
- Virtual Office Hours
  - Tuesday, February 24, 9-10 am - [Join Here](#)
  - Wednesday, March 4, 3-4 pm - [Join Here](#)

# Q&A

