UNITED WAY OF GREATER LOS ANGELES

PROSPERITY FUND
Local Initiative Funding Application

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following is a supplemental Frequently Asked Questions document. Full application materials are available on the United Way of Greater LA (UWGLA) Grantseekers website (https://unitedwayla.org/grantseekers).

If you have additional questions, email rfp@unitedwayla.org or join a planned informational session.

This FAQ document will be updated with new questions and responses over time. New sections will be noted within each sub-section by a statement in red text and the date of addition.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1) QUESTION: *When is the deadline to submit an application?*

ANSWER: Unlike other United Way funding opportunities this opportunity is rolling, which means it will stay open throughout the year without a closing date.

2) QUESTION: *How is the Prosperity Fund related to the Prosperity Network?*

ANSWER: Both the Prosperity Fund and Prosperity Network are key components of UWGLA's Community Prosperity Initiative. All organizations selected for funding through the Fund will be invited to be part of the Initiative's growing Prosperity Network. All organizations will be invited into celebration, learning, and peer spaces, while some will be invited into deeper coordination and collective action opportunities based on their interest, capacity, Network need, and depth of engagement and impact in focus industries and communities. We also assume that many of the partners involved in our Prosperity Network will be likely applicants. But please note that being part of the Prosperity Network (e.g., being involved in a neighborhood workgroup) does not automatically qualify or guarantee funding.

3) QUESTION: *Can I join the Network if my request is declined?*

ANSWER: Yes, UWGLA will consider organizations whose asks may not be selected for funding but the organization showcases strong experience and potential for partnership at some level of the Prosperity Network.

4) QUESTION: *I'm not sure if I am eligible? I'm not sure if I have maxed out on asks? I'm not sure if someone else from my organization has already started an account / application?*

ANSWER: Reach out to UWGLA by emailing rfp@unitedwayla.org and we can help you figure it out.

<p align="center">**--- Below Questions and Answers Added as of 10/02/2024 ---**</p>

1) QUESTION: *How should I calculate the market opportunity value for my proposal?*

ANSWER: Assigning a valuation to unlocking a market opportunity should involve estimating/calculating the potential financial impact that entering or expanding into a market can have locally. This ultimately should be a dollar value that is based on data, experience/knowledge, and initial work. You can tailor the level of your analysis based on how much data you have access to and how significant the opportunity is. For early-stage efforts, market opportunity values may be calculated based on field research and experience and will likely be estimates based on appropriate assumptions.

For larger, more established initiatives, organizations should rely on previous experience and outcomes or specific opportunities you have secured such as public/private contract commitments that this work will directly unlock. For example, if you have previous run a vendor market or there are other local markets you are modeling yours after, use previous sales figures and data to calculate the potential economic opportunity of the total number of markets you plan to run using the requested funds.

While we recognize there may be a broader market opportunity related to your efforts, for purposes of this application your calculated market opportunity should focus on the value unlocked/potentially unlocked by your specific proposed initiative and within the neighborhood of focus you named in the application.

ELIGIBILITY

1) QUESTION: *I see there are preapproved communities. If I am not located in one of those listed, am I eligible to apply?*

ANSWER: Yes. All funding requests must be rooted in AND directly benefit an eligible community. For those with asks connected to neighborhoods UWGLA has "preapproved" you will have the benefit of not having to justify your neighborhood choice. For all other neighborhoods, applicants will need to outline how their selected neighborhood meets all of the following criteria:
- Community is located in Los Angeles County
- Community must have a strong identity and representative history overcoming exclusion, particularly centering communities of color and immigrant neighborhoods, AND
- Community already has a collaborative or strong leader located in the neighborhood that is mobilizing local partners around more democratic and localized models of community economic development.

Additionally, for any focus neighborhoods that are identified in the proposal, applicants will need to present strong evidence that the proposed funding request is directly benefitting and/or leveraging a strong existing partnership that extends the benefits of the proposed funding request to the identified focus neighborhood(s).

Selecting a neighborhood solely on the basis that you have project and/or partnership ties to the neighborhood does not necessarily qualify it as an eligible community for purposes of the Prosperity Fund.

FUNDING AMOUNT + USES

1) QUESTION: *If I was previously funded, can I come back for additional costs related to the same project/effort?*

ANSWER: Yes. In fact, we are very excited to support costs that build on each other. For example, someone who requests funds for a feasibility or market study and then later comes back with an ask based on the learnings/results of that work for implementation.

<p align="center">**--- Below Questions and Answers Added as of 10/02/2024 ---**</p>

2) QUESTION: *How much can I apply for through the Fund?*

ANSWER: Organizations may apply multiple times a year to the Fund. Each application may not exceed $150,000 in one-time costs to advance inclusive economic solutions and unlock a market opportunity. Overall organizations may only receive $150,000 maximum across all awarded applications, whether through a single request or multiple each year (UWGLA fiscal year, July – June).

3) QUESTION: *Can I submit multiple applications at the same time to ask for support for multiple asks as long as they cumulatively don't exceed $150,000?*

ANSWER: No. Organizations may have more than one application open at once but may only submit one application at a time for consideration. For example, if an organization has an active request under review they must wait for funding notification before submitting another request. Each UWGLA fiscal year (July – June) organizations may apply as many times as eligible but may only receive a maximum of $150,000 across all awarded requests.

4) QUESTION: *What is an example of a single cost?*

ANSWER: Please refer to page 3 of the Prosperity Fund Application Document for examples of eligible single costs by accessing the document here: Prosperity-Fund-Funding-Application-Document-2024.pdf (unitedwayla.org)

5) QUESTION: *Can I submit multiple costs at once if they are all part of the same project?*

ANSWER: Through this opportunity we will consider one cost at a time unless a compelling justification can be made for why/how the proposed costs are interconnected. For example, if an organization requires a piece of equipment in parallel with a software purchase, or if an organization pays for consulting services to produce a report and additionally requests design or printing of that same report, this could qualify as being considered an interconnected cost.

Another instance of interconnected costs might be an organization paying for consultants that are providing distinct but complementary services that are both advancing the same project. For example, paying for consulting services to support the design and implementation of a pilot community market initiative while also paying for consulting services to conduct an evaluation of the same pilot to assess long-term feasibility.

While funding requests for justifiable interconnected costs may be considered, asks with multiple unrelated costs will not be considered. Organizational and program-related asks will also not be considered. Examples of organizational-level asks include, but are not limited to rent, utilities, insurance, etc. Examples of program-level asks include, but are not limited to staff salaries, travel expenses, annual subscriptions and memberships, etc.

6) QUESTION: *My organization runs an economic stability / mobility program that helps households save and grow their financial well-being. Does that work align with the goals of the initiative? Can you provide an example of a project that advances shared prosperity?*

ANSWER: Economic mobility has been a key pillar of UWGLA's work historically. Through this investment and our broader initiative, we are evolving that work to focus on shared, community prosperity. We welcome asks that additionally move beyond individual economic advancement to consider how to advance shared and community prosperity. A general example of a project that advances shared prosperity could be a shared commercial kitchen space that simultaneously functions as a food business and career pathways development program as well as an actual sit-down food space for the broader community.

Proposals that detail how a funding request is supporting investments that activate market opportunities for the broader local community will make for more competitive applications overall. We are especially interested in proposals that explain how the applicant is directly involved in the ownership and/or operation of the market opportunity they are requesting funding support for to ensure that access to those opportunities can be provided directly versus relying on a partnership referral or just providing training and skills development but no direct connections to opportunities that realize the training and skills acquired.

<div align="center">--- Below Questions and Answers Added as of 02/12/2025 ---</div>

7) QUESTION: *Can a portion of the funding request be allocated towards indirect/administrative expenses?*

ANSWER: For applicants requesting funding for physical improvement projects, up to 10% of the total funding requested may be used to support indirect expenses. This 10% cap applies only to applications that are specifically focused on projects that have a central physical improvement component and does not include any other types of projects or funding requests made through the Prosperity Fund. Examples of eligible physical improvement-related projects include, but are not limited to, physical space improvements, site upgrades, site renovations, infrastructural improvements, and facility expansions. Eligible indirect expenses may include administrative personnel costs, office and rent utilities, office supplies and equipment, and marketing costs.

REVIEW & SELECTION

1) QUESTION: *How often can I apply?*

ANSWER: Organizations can apply multiple times a year. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis with reviews taking place every quarter. For example, if you submit within July–August submission window, your organization will receive a response by end of September. Only one application will be considered at a time. For example, if an organization has an active ask under review they must wait for funding notification before submitting another request. Each UWGLA fiscal year (July – June) organizations may apply as many times as eligible but may only receive a maximum of $150,000 across all awarded requests.

2) QUESTION: *If I am part of the Prosperity Network (e.g., being part of neighborhood workgroup) already does that prequalify my organization for funding? Or are my requests prioritized?*

ANSWER: While partnership will always be a consideration for selection, this is an open and competitive funding opportunity. Already being a Network partner does not guarantee funding.

AWARDS & CONTRACTING

1) QUESTION: *When will I know if I am selected for funding?*

ANSWER: Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis with reviews taking place every quarter. For example, if you submit within July–August submission window, your organization will receive a response by end of September. This cadence of review will continue through the year.

2) QUESTION: *What is the contracting process like?*

ANSWER: All awarded organizations will contract directly with UWGLA. Depending on the nature and size of the commitment, a contract will be developed and signed electronically by UWGLA leadership and your organization's authorized signatories. Additional organizational paperwork including IRS letter or W-9 Form and ACH banking information will be collected if your organization isn't a recent contractor of UWGLA. After contract execution, organizations will be paid according to contract outlined payment schedule.

3) QUESTION: *If awarded will we be paid in one payment or multiple?*

ANSWER: Currently we anticipate paying in full, upon contract execution. As necessary, due to project readiness, UWGLA may elect to make some or all of the payment contingent. This will be determined in partnership with the awarded organization.

GRANTS PORTAL & SUBMISSION PROCESS

1) QUESTION*: Do I already have an account on Survey Monkey Apply? How can I check?*

ANSWER: We encourage all partners to verify if they have an organizational account in UWGLA's Survey Monkey

Apply system (https://unitedwayla.smapply.io/) before creating a new account. 1) Try to login or recover a password if you feel you already have an account; 2) Check internally with your staff and team members to see if anyone set up an account for a recent funding opportunity with UWGLA such as Shelter Improvement or Emergency Food and Shelter Program; and 3) Email rfp@unitedwayla.org and our team can verify if an account exists.

2) QUESTION: *Who should I contact if I have an issue using the online grant management system?*

ANSWER: For RFP related questions, please contact rfp@unitedwayla.org. If you run into a technical problem with the online system, please reach out to Survey Monkey Apply directly through the online portal.

3) QUESTION: *Is there a preferred type of staff or team members to be the primary user for your grants management system?*

ANSWER: If you are newly signing up for Survey Monkey Apply we encourage you to make an account that will be accessible long-term. That may mean using the email of a key staff leader or grants manager, but we also encourage use of shared inboxes for grants management wherever possible.

4) QUESTION: *Will the system save my work as I go? If I submit but need to fix something, can I reopen my application?*

ANSWER: There is the opportunity to save at the bottom of every application page. Please save your work as you go, particularly before you exit the system. Survey Monkey Apply will preserve all answers saved before moving pages and exiting for you to return to.

5) QUESTION: *If I submit but need to fix something, can I reopen my application?*

ANSWER: After submission you will not be able to reopen your application on your own. If you need to reopen your application, please contact rfp@unitedwayla.org.