



United Way
Central Alberta



Frequently Asked Questions

United Way Central Alberta Community Impact Strategy 2026 -2029

United Way Central Alberta (UWCA) is working to create communities where everyone has the resources, opportunities and support they need to thrive. We achieve this by:

- INVESTING donor dollars in vital programs that impact local communities
- PARTNERING with citizens, community agencies, businesses and government to address the social issues people face every day
- BUILDING CAPACITY in communities to help people live vibrant and resilient lives
- ADVOCATING for change locally, provincially and nationally

Why did United Way Central Alberta update their Community Impact Strategy?

The last Community Impact Strategy was developed in 2023. At that time, we made fundamental changes to our mission and vision, our community impact priorities, and our community partnership model.

The 2026 - 2029 Community Impact Strategy is a continuation of our deliberate shift toward a more collaborative, community held, and equity-centred way of setting direction for United Way Central Alberta.

How was the strategy updated?

UWCA's volunteer-led Community Impact Council (CIC) facilitated a review of the 2023-2026 Community Impact Strategy in the fall of 2025. The review process engaged a range of voices and prioritized meaningful dialogue. The approach created structured opportunities for shared learning and explored the implications of demographic, social, and economic trends in Central Alberta. Additionally, emerging research and feedback from local, provincial, and national sources were shared and considered. CIC's work moved beyond reviewing recommendations; they were asked to question assumptions and collaboratively explore the challenges and opportunities within Central Alberta's current realities. Community insight was critical and integrated into the process. UWCA gathered direct community-based organizations' input through conversations, as well as a broad-scale agency survey on emerging priorities, sector challenges and needs.

What is new?

Agencies may now apply for multi-year funding under the **BASIC NEEDS Focus Area**:

1. Support people who are navigating the complex system of government and social services, trying to meet their basic needs.

Language changes were made to the following granting streams reflecting our intent towards broader inclusion:

MENTAL HEALTH Focus Area:

1. Improve access to culturally responsive mental health and addictions support or intervention programs. Programs must be led by individuals and/or organizations for whom the program intends to support.

BRIGHTER FUTURES Focus Area:

1. Increase access to culturally responsive parenting programs and supports. Programs must be led by individuals and/or organizations for whom the program intends to support.
2. Increase access to culturally responsive youth programs. Programs must be led by individuals and/or organizations for whom the program intends to support.
3. Increase access to programs that support the development of essential life skills in youth.

What are the areas of focus for funding?

We believe the best opportunity to enable people and communities to thrive rests in three focus areas:

Basic Needs Ensuring access to basic needs.	Mental Health Increasing access to suitable mental health services.	Brighter Futures Creating positive futures with new possibilities.
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We understand that the best way to support people is through a holistic approach that considers the physical, mental, spiritual, and cultural aspects of thriving.

When are you implementing the new grants?

We have several grant streams:

- Multi-year grants for programs whose work aligns with our priorities.
 - **Applications Open: March 16th, 2026, and close April 17th at midnight.**
 - Successful applicants for the multi-year grants will have their contracts begin on July 1, 2026.
- Project funding for one-time initiatives or innovative ideas. Included in this category are small grants for Professional Development and Capital and Equipment.
 - **Applications open on April 1st, 2026, and are available year-round while funds remain.**

How much money will you be investing in grants?

Our annual fundraising campaign closes March 31st, 2026. We will share more on our fundraising results and our annual budget in April, however we anticipate a similar allocations budget as our last three-year grant cycle. Last year's granting allocations was \$580,500.

Is there a maximum amount of funding an organization can request?

There is no maximum request amount for multi-year program funding. However, due to high demand and limited resources, the amount awarded may be lower than the amount requested, depending on available funds and alignment with our Community Impact Strategy.

For our other grant streams, the following funding limits apply:

- Project Grants: up to \$7,500
- Professional Development Grants: up to \$1,000
- Capital & Equipment Grants: up to \$1,000

What due diligence is involved in where the money is going? Has this changed?

This has not changed. The volunteer-led Community Impact Council continues to be responsible for annual funding allocations. The CIC is intentionally composed of individuals with diverse lived, professional, and volunteer experience, representing a mixture of geographies, sectors, and population groups. CIC remains rigorous in ensuring that funds are invested in our community responsibly and transparently, and in programs that align with the Community Impact Strategy and eligibility criteria.

Who can I contact if I have questions or would like more information on any of the granting streams?

For additional information or support in-person, online or over the phone, please contact:

Alexis Forbes, Community Relations Portfolio Lead, alexis@caunitedway.ca or 403-309-3820