

# The CT Cannabis Social Equity Council

## Community Reinvestment Grant Program



United Way of Coastal  
and Western Connecticut

### Notice of Funds Availability

**Date Released: July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

#### **ABOUT THE SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL:**

The Social Equity Council (SEC) is an entity within the Department of Economic and Community Development formed by statute and signed into law by Governor Ned Lamont in 2021. The SEC was created to ensure that the adult-use cannabis program is grown equitably, and that funds from the adult-use cannabis program are reinvested in the communities hardest hit by the “war on drugs.”

#### **ABOUT THE UNITED WAY OF COASTAL AND WESTERN CT:**

United Way of Coastal and Western Connecticut (UWCWC) empowers low-to-moderate-income households to thrive by mobilizing the resources of local communities to create lasting change. UWCWC leverages evidence-based strategies and strategic partnerships to improve outcomes in 3 key areas – education and child care, health and food security, financial stability and basic needs – while creating systemic change for the nearly 40% of families living at or below the ALICE® (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) threshold. UWCWC serves 27 communities across Fairfield and Southern Litchfield Counties, including the Cities of Bridgeport, Danbury, Norwalk, and Stamford, and the Towns of Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Darien, Easton, Fairfield, Kent, Monroe, New Canaan, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield, Roxbury, Sherman, Stratford, Trumbull, Warren, Washington, Westport, Wilton, and Weston, Connecticut. UWCWC is the result of a July 1, 2023 merger between United Way of Coastal Fairfield County and United Way of Western Connecticut.

We acknowledge that there are systems of power that grant privilege and access unequally such that inequity and injustice result. Therefore, the UWCWC is committed to the support and advancement of equity in the communities we serve, and this extends to the organizations we fund.

#### **SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT PURPOSE:**

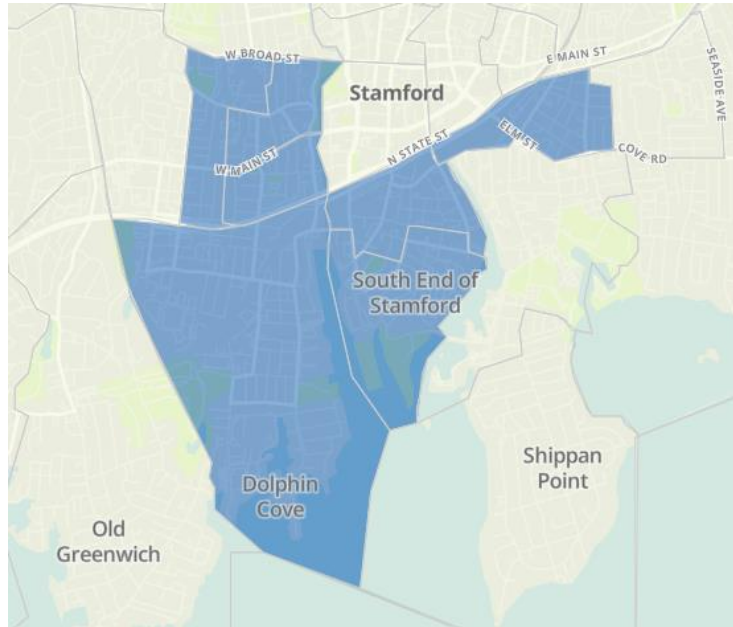
- As part of a pilot reinvestment program the United Way of Coastal and Western Connecticut (UWCWC) will receive proposals from organizations serving Disproportionately Impacted Areas (DIA) within the Cities of Bridgeport and Stamford to exclusively fund the development, expansion, and support of Projects that uplift communities and strengthen families disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs in the categories of Reentry/Reintegration Projects and Youth Education, Recreation, and Arts.
- To support broad-based economic development in DIA communities. **(see attached map – in development)**
- To increase the quality of life, vibrancy, accessibility, and equity in communities disproportionately harmed by cannabis prohibition and enforcement.

#### **WHAT IS A DIA:**

- A DIA is a census tract in the state that has a historical conviction rate for drug-related offenses greater than one-tenth of the population, as determined by the SEC.
- To identify these census tracts, arrest and conviction records from the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) were geocoded to calculate the count of cannabis-related convictions in Connecticut from 1982-2020 by census tract. Geocoding refers to a process for converting street addresses into spatial data (latitude and longitude) that can be displayed as features on a map.
- There are 27 municipalities with qualifying DIA census tracts.

**ELIGIBLE DIA IN THE CITIES OF BRIDGEPORT AND STAMFORD:**

<b>Stamford Census Tracts</b>			
223	222.02	222.01	221.01
214.01	215.02	215.01	



<b>Bridgeport Census Tracts</b>			
704	705	703	702
710	711	712	709
720	719	716	714
713	706	744	2572
735	736	739	738
743	737	740	734
729	728	731	732
733			



## GRANT AWARD AND ASK AMOUNTS:

The minimum grant award for the 2023-2024 Community Reinvestment Grant process will be \$10,000.

Applicants should carefully consider what size grant is most appropriate for their organization's programmatic needs and administrative capacity. Applicants should request a grant amount that is appropriate for:

- The organization's experience administering grants of a similar size and model, including their programmatic focus on matters associated with the 'war on drugs' and its address of it through the use of these funds;
- The amount of the organization's annual total revenue;
- The organization's administrative capacity and sound financial practices;
- The sustainability of the program/service being provided through this funding; and
- The ability to spend and report on full funding by June 30, 2024.

Matching funds (donations from private and public groups) are not required but help demonstrate support for your project and strengthen your proposal. Matching funds may be in-kind or cash. In-kind donations are donations of products and services and include volunteer time and labor. Cash donations are donations of money, generally for a specific budget item.

Funding recommendations will be made by United Way of Coastal and Western Connecticut to the Social Equity Council. All funding requests are subject to a final vote of the Social Equity Council.

## ELIGIBILITY:

The following requirements must be met in order for an application to receive funding through the Community Reinvestment Grant Program:

1. The organization must be a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization legally allowed to operate within the State of Connecticut or community-based organization with a fiscal sponsor.
2. The organization must be based primarily in Connecticut and be employing primarily Connecticut residents. The organization has been registered to conduct business in Connecticut at least 12 months before applying for this grant.
3. The organization is in good standing with all State and Local taxes and with all state agencies.
4. The organization must serve clients and/or communities in at least one of the eligible DIA census tracts for Bridgeport or Stamford.
5. All funds must be expended by June 30, 2024.
6. Funding shall be used exclusively in the development, expansion, and support of programs that uplift communities and strengthen families disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs in the following categories:
  - a. *Reentry/Reintegration Programs*
    - i. Programs that support formerly incarcerated individuals and their families (i.e. fatherhood/parenthood/grandparents initiatives)
    - ii. Civil legal aid
    - iii. Justice involved youth
    - iv. Expungement/criminal record erasure
    - v. Homelessness
    - vi. Family stability
    - vii. Community uplifting
    - viii. Organizing and empowerment
  - b. *Youth Education, Recreation and Arts:*
    - i. Enrichment programs for young people and their families that assist in preparing the future workforce
    - ii. STEM/STEAM
    - iii. Financial Literacy

- iv. Promoting physical and mental health wellness
- v. Sports
- vi. Mentoring
- vii. Youth and parent leadership and empowerment
- viii. Creative culture programs (i.e., performance arts, music, dance, instruments, etc.)
- ix. Community uplifting
- x. Organizing and empowerment

#### **NON-ELIGIBLE USE OF FUNDS:**

- Loan Fund (create/replenish)
- Lobbying
- Payment of taxes
- Subsidizing a business
- Refinancing or restructuring existing debt
- Relocation of a business
- Personal loans
- Personal needs (such as child support, rent, utilities, etc.)
- Illegal activities

**INDIRECT COSTS:** **No indirect costs are allowed.** Indirect costs represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with a particular grant, contract, project function or activity, but are necessary for the general operation of the organization. Examples include items that are associated with running the organization as a whole, like administrative staff salaries, rent, utilities, office supplies, printing, etc.

**SUBCONTRACTED COSTS:** Subcontracting is a process through which participating organizations agree on funding, work requirements, administrative requirements, and reporting expectations and then formalize those expectations through a binding agreement. These costs typically include granting a portion of your awarded funds to another organization to further the purpose of your agency or program. **Subcontracted costs are allowed if they further the purpose of the grant.** Costs must be specified in the program budget and substantiated.

#### **FISCAL AGENTS AND SPONSORS:**

The SEC requires that grantees meet all of the above [eligibility requirements](#). If you are a community-based organization and do not meet all of the eligibility requirements, you must have a fiscal agent or sponsor.

##### ***Who can be a fiscal agent or sponsor?***

Any organization or business that meets the above eligibility requirements. The UWCWC cannot act as a fiscal agent or sponsor for the purposes of this grant.

##### ***What does a fiscal agent or sponsor do?***

The fiscal agent or sponsor is a third-party organization that handles various financial and administrative duties on behalf of another organization or collaborative.

The exact division of tasks between the grantee and fiscal agent should be agreed upon after reviewing the grant agreement template and acknowledging a mutual understanding of each other's responsibilities.



## UWCWC COMMUNITY IMPACT STAFF CONTACT LIST:

The Community Impact Team is responsible for implementing the Community Reinvestment Grant Process and is an important resource for organizations interested in applying. The team is available to be contacted by phone and/or email.

Title	Staff Person	Phone Number	Email
Senior VP of Community Impact	Ashley Gaudiano	203-297-6726	<a href="mailto:Ashley.gaudiano@unitedwaycwc.org">Ashley.gaudiano@unitedwaycwc.org</a>
Senior Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Yolande Ford	203-883-6701	<a href="mailto:Yolande.ford@unitedwaycwc.org">Yolande.ford@unitedwaycwc.org</a>
Community Impact Manager	Victoria Scofield	203-883-6704	<a href="mailto:victoria.scofield@unitedwaycwc.org">victoria.scofield@unitedwaycwc.org</a>
Community Impact Program Coordinator	Meghan Hadley	203-883-6034	<a href="mailto:meghan.hadley@unitedwaycwc.org">meghan.hadley@unitedwaycwc.org</a>

## APPLICATION EVALUATION PROCESS:

The UWCWC will utilize the following application evaluation process for funding:

1. *Technical Review by Community Impact Staff* – Applications will be reviewed for technical, geographical, and funding category eligibility. This step is evaluated on a pass/fail scale. All applicants must meet technical, geographical, and funding category eligibility criteria to qualify for the program. Please see the [Eligibility](#) section for more information.
2. *Local Application Review* – Applications will be shared with our two review teams, one team for Bridgeport and one for Stamford. During this time the review teams may reach out with questions regarding your application through the e-CImpact platform. Please keep an eye on your email for notifications of when a review team member has a question or feedback to provide you. **Click here to access a copy of the application scoring sheet – Currently in development.**
3. *SEC Review Team Recommendations Review* – Once our local review teams have made recommendations, the UWCWC will send these recommendations to the SEC for a final review and vote.

## FUNDING ACCEPTANCE:

If the application is selected for a SEC Community Reinvestment Grant – either partially or fully – the organization will receive the following documents within 10 days of approval from SEC:

- Funding Letter
- Grant Agreement – Click here to review an example of the grant agreement for this grant.

By executing the Grant Agreement, the organization accepts all SEC funding as awarded in the Funding Letter. In order for the organization to receive the awarded funds, the organization must agree to all SEC and United Way requirements for the accepted funding, as outlined in the Grant Agreement. The Agreement must be signed and dated by the Organization's Executive Director/CEO/President. United Way uses the e-CImpact platform to distribute and execute the Agreements.

In the following situations, an email must be submitted to United Way outlining the reasons for changes or declined funding:

1. If any program requires material changes as a result of the level of funding awarded. Changes to the program and continued funding of the program are subject to the approval of the Community Impact Team.
2. If the Organization elects to decline funding.

Emails communicating material changes or declined funding should be sent to:

Victoria Scofield, MSW at [victoria.scofield@unitedwaycwc.org](mailto:victoria.scofield@unitedwaycwc.org)

**REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Funded agencies will be required to submit quarterly reports highlighting spending of funding, progress in project completion, outcomes, and impact of funding on the community. UWCWC staff will provide technical assistance to support organizations with collecting the appropriate data and completing reports.

We anticipate reports will be due as follows, though dates are subject to change based on Social Equity Council guidance:

October 15, 2023

January 15, 2024

April 15, 2024

July 15, 2024 – Final report due

**Sample quarterly reports are available here. – Currently in development**

**Sample final reports are available here. – Currently in development**