

United Way of the Eastern Panhandle Unity Campaign 2026 Eligibility Criteria and Guidelines

These guidelines offer general guidance and are not a guarantee of application acceptance to the Unity Campaign of the Eastern Panhandle. Each application is evaluated on its potential value to the Eastern Panhandle; the quality of planning, leadership, support and vision expressed; and the relative need for the program proposed.

Eligibility

Any 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, including schools and government agencies, that serve the West Virginia counties of Morgan, Berkeley and Jefferson are eligible to apply. Applications should align with United Way of the Eastern Panhandle's (UWEP) Impact Areas and Focus Issues. United Way's Impact Areas are Youth Opportunity, Financial Security, A Healthy Community and Community Resiliency.

Organizations must comply with all regulations of the state, county and federal government pertaining to proper licensing, health and safety requirements and operation within the State of West Virginia. Organizations accepted into the Unity Campaign must also abide by the Fundraising Policies and Guidelines for the Unity Campaign, which outlines responsibilities and reporting requirements related to campaign funds.

Funding Considerations

Permissible funding includes direct service costs and/or personnel costs associated with new, current or expansion of programs or projects as described in the submitted application.

Funding Priorities

Proceeds from the 2026 Unity Campaign of the Eastern Panhandle will go to organizations that work in the areas that support youth opportunity, a healthy community, financial security and community resiliency. The 2026 Unity Campaign will support local nonprofits as a continued phase of pandemic recovery efforts.

Preference is given to projects or programs that:

- Leverage funds in addition to any Campaign Funds
- Are collaborative projects or programs
- Utilize volunteers
- Demonstrate measurable outcomes
- Encourage more effective/innovative use of limited community resources
- Promote diversity, equity and inclusion in the Eastern Panhandle community

Funding requests will be considered for the following types of projects or programs:

- One-time: Immediate needs such as purchase of equipment and/or a specific initiative
- On-going: Funding to continue an already established project or program

Limitations

Unity Campaign funds are not for the following:

- After-the-fact support
- Operating deficits

Confidentiality

Although the deliberations and discussions of the committee are strictly confidential, United Way staff will share information with other individuals and agencies as needed. To assist the applicant, United Way staff may discuss general concerns and questions with the applicant.

Decision-Making and Application Review Process

Upon receipt of the completed applications, the requests will go through a community impact review process by UWEP. The UWEP Community Investment Committee is comprised of community leaders who volunteer their time on an annual basis to make investment recommendations to the full board of directors. As a steward of community dollars, United Way requires thorough evaluations of all requests received. The evaluation process may include requests for additional information. Final decisions on all applications rest with the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle Board of Directors.

Conflict of Interest Policy

United Way of the Eastern Panhandle maintains a strict conflict of interest policy for its Board, staff and volunteers to ensure independence and integrity in its recommendations.

Reporting Requirements

United Way of the Eastern Panhandle requires accountability and transparency in all aspects of our operations. Organizations selected may be required to complete an outcome report form no-later-than December 31, 2026. In addition to the requested information, please consider including any additional information or material that you feel is relevant to the project. Consider including pictures of the event, news or media coverage and testimonials from participants. Completed reports will be submitted electronically to United Way.

United Way of the Eastern Panhandle Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Statement

Inclusiveness: We are strong only when we are inclusive. We, therefore:

- aspire to involve every segment of the community in every aspect of our work;
- act in ways that respect the dignity, uniqueness, and intrinsic worth of every person, the community, the donors, our own Board members, employees, volunteers and representatives; and
- believe in a movement built from the rich diversity and gifts of all people in all systems.

Diversity & Equal Opportunity: UWEP is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to the principle of diversity. We, therefore:

- value, champion and embrace diversity in all aspects of UWEP activities and respect others without regard to race, color, religion, creed, age, gender, national origin or ancestry, marital status, veteran status, genetics, sexual orientation or status as a qualified disabled or handicapped individual;
- support affirmative action and equal opportunity programs; the Board will review its diversity and affirmative action policies every three years; and
- refuse to engage in or tolerate in any form of discrimination or harassment.

Timeframe

Applications to participate in the 2025 Unity Campaign will open on November 14, 2025. Applications will be due by noon on December 12, 2025. An information session will be held November 21, 2025.

United Way is required to fully review and evaluate all applications. Agencies will be notified of their pending approval status by January 9, 2026. Final approval as a participating agency will be contingent on the mandatory attendance of Unity Campaign training on January 15. A lack of requested information or an incomplete application will delay the decision-making and approval process. Attendance at the training is required for approval to participate.

Please contact Penny Porter for additional information:

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