



What are Community Fund grants?

The UWCNM Community Fund combines the gifts of more than 17,000 individuals. These funds are used to provide program grants to health and human services nonprofits in central New Mexico that support services related to health, education, financial stability, and basic needs for thousands of individuals, children, seniors, and families. Approximately 100-150 central New Mexican health and human service nonprofit agencies apply for Community Fund grants every year.

In 2016, UWCNM launched four multi-year Community Impact Project Grants to support initiatives related to summer learning, behavioral health, attendance, and adult transitions to college. Learn more on our [website](#).

Who makes grant determinations?

UWCNM Community Fund grantmaking is community-driven. Every year, more than 150 donors, volunteers, and community members spend hundreds of hours to help determine where Community Fund dollars are invested. This process starts with a Financial Standards Review done by a group of volunteer financial professionals that assess the financial health of the applicant agencies. If an agency meets those standards, they are invited to submit an application for funding. Once applications are in, volunteers are assigned to Grant Review Panels that evaluate agency proposals for funding.

How are grant determinations made?

Grant Review Panels of 5-7 volunteers review all proposals related to an assigned Result Area(s) from the UWCNM [Strategy Maps](#) in order to gain a holistic view of the assigned issue area. Every effort is made to staff panels with at least one volunteer with significant subject matter knowledge. Panel members then score each proposal individually after having read it and attended the related presentation.

Using panel members' scores and comments for discussion, panel members agree on one **panel score** per agency. Although individual panel members do score proposals, **only the Allocation Panel combined score is used for funding consideration**. In addition to a score, Allocation Panels determine the following per agency:

- **Impact Award Recommendation:** The minimum funding amount necessary to ensure the program's intended impact. If UWCNM cannot fulfill the impact recommendation due to limited funding or agency score, the request will not be funded.
- **Ideal Award Recommendation:** The ideal amount of funding, from the panel's perspective, to guarantee the program's intended impact.
- **Panel Statement:** A distillation of the panel's assessment of the program, meant to provide insight into their reasoning for the level of funding they recommend. The panel statement is meant to improve funding decisions, provide future panels with insight, and provide meaningful feedback to agencies.

Once panels have submitted their award recommendations, the work of the Community Impact Council (CIC) begins. The CIC is a volunteer subcommittee of the UWCNM Board that is responsible for community planning and resource distribution. Based on total dollars available, the CIC determines funding award recommendations that will be brought to the Board of Directors for final approval.

Each year, the CIC determines the total amount to be allocated *per issue area* (Education, Health, Financial Stability) by first ensuring that dollars designated by donors and affinity groups to each Community Fund Issue Area are honored. The CIC then uses the total ideal recommendations given in each issue area to determine the percentage of total ideal recommendations they represent.

The CIC uses submitted panel scores to rank agencies per Issue Area (with the highest scoring agencies at the top of the list). The CIC then takes into consideration the scores and Panel Statement received by each Allocation Panel. Using these as a guide, agencies are assigned a tier level (1-5) based on their score.

Based on past history of actual amounts distributed, each tier is assigned a percentage of the Allocation Panel's ideal funding recommendation. Funds are then allocated beginning with the highest scoring agencies in the top tiers. Special consideration is given to programs that primarily serve residents of rural areas, especially if the agency is the sole provider of services in underserved rural areas. This process is repeated with the remaining tiers until funds are depleted.

How are Community Impact Project (CIP) Grant determinations made?

Community Impact Projects are well-informed, multi-year investments with a discrete issue area focus that have a special emphasis on continuous quality improvement and outcomes measurement. Unlike the expansive allocations of the annual grant process, only a select few CIP proposals are selected for funding, so there are a few differences between the CIP and annual determination processes.

First, proposals are vetted for completeness and alignment with the requirements of the request for proposals. Those that do not contain all required elements as laid out in the RFP, and/or do not clearly and directly relate to the intended outcome of the RFP are eliminated from further consideration. A volunteer Allocation Panel comprised of community members and subject matter experts then reviews and scores proposals individually. The Allocation Panel then invites the few top scoring applicants to a 30-minute conference. This conference provides the opportunity for Allocation Panel members and agency representatives to speak in detail about the project proposed. The Allocation Panel chooses one or two proposals, per RFP issue area, for funding, and passes that funding recommendation on to the Community Impact Council and Board of Directors for final approval.