



WHATCOM COUNTY
**HEALTH AND
COMMUNITY
SERVICES**



UNITED WAY
Whatcom County

2025 Community Impact Grants Common Application

PART A: COVER PAGE

Please fill out this form completely. Note that individual funding agencies have specific grant requirements and will require supplemental materials. Please check the agency website below for details.

To which source are you applying?

- City of Bellingham’s Housing or Human/Social Services NOFA:
<https://cob.org/services/housing/funding-opportunities-2/partnerships-funding>
- United Way of Whatcom County’s Community Impact Fund:
<https://www.unitedwaywhatcom.org/help-for-organizations/>
- Whatcom County Health and Community Services:
<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/Bids.aspx>

Agency Contact Information:

Agency Name: Northwest Youth Services
 DBA (if applicable): Click here to enter text.
 EIN: 91-0970561 UEID (from SAM.gov): SZ5YG55PQYE5
 Mailing address: 1020 N State St Bellingham, WA 98225
 Website: nwys.org
 General Phone: 360-734-9862
 State of Washington Business License Number(s): 601 028 746

Executive Director (or authorized representative):

Name: Lance Jones
 Title (if not ED): Interim Executive Director
 Email: lancej@nwys.org
 Phone: 564.565.8862

Name: Dianne Ersser
 Title: Senior Director of Financial and Business Operations
 Email: dianee@nwys.org
 Phone: Click here to enter text.

Application Contact (If different):

Program Information:

Program Name: Northwest Youth Services - General operating
 Program Address: 1020 N State St Bellingham, WA



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Are all program services delivered at this address? Yes No

Funding Request: The award amount is dependent on the funding organization. Please see individual funder’s supplemental materials for more information about the funds available.

How much funding per year are you requesting for this program?

\$ 35,000

Total Annual Project Budget:

\$ 5,920,095.99

Annual Organizational Budget:

\$ 5,920,095.99

PART B: AGENCY INFORMATION

Please limit your responses to no more than two pages for questions 1-5.

1. **Agency Mission.** Please paste or copy your agency’s mission statement below.

At Northwest Youth Services, we affirm youth experience and autonomy, as we work together to foster collective healing and justice, in order to dismantle the systems of oppression that perpetuate youth homelessness.

2. **Agency Beneficiaries.** Briefly describe the intent of your agency’s programs and who primarily benefits from them. Please describe your organization’s impact, specifying the number of beneficiaries or clients served per year and their demographics.

Northwest Youth Services (NWYS) serves youth and young adults ages 13-24 experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity in Whatcom and Skagit Counties. We provide services such as emergency and short-term housing, basic needs and hygiene care, employment and education navigation, case management, and identity-specific care.

In 2023, Northwest Youth Services (NWYS) provided critical support to 1,205 young people across all our service areas, with many engaging in multiple services throughout the year. Of those served in 2023, 28% identified as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC), and 32% identified as LGBTQ+.

Our client demographics reflect the diverse and often underserved youth population in Whatcom and Skagit Counties, many of whom face significant challenges, including homelessness, housing instability, economic hardship, and systemic discrimination. Many of the young people we serve have experienced trauma, mental health challenges, and barriers to accessing education, employment, and healthcare.



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3. **Qualifications and expertise.** Briefly summarize your agency's qualifications and expertise (e.g., years of operation, accreditations, experience of staff members, and number of volunteers). Please mention any recent major organizational changes.

With a proven track record of serving and supporting 1,200+ young people every year since 1976, NWYS has the experience and human-centered approach to tackle this issue effectively. Our organization has strong ties to the communities we serve, especially in rural areas such as Sedro-Woolley and Ferndale, where we've established valued relationships and gained unique insights into local challenges. NWYS currently has 50 full-time staff and about 70 volunteers. Our team brings a wealth of specialized skills and resources, including lived experience, a deep understanding of local resources, and certifications such as SUDP and Masters in Human Services. Finally, our "no wrong door" approach to services ensures that we are well-equipped to use these funds effectively, making meaningful, sustainable progress toward ending young and young adult homelessness.

4. **Racial Equity and Social Justice.** What steps has your organization taken to address issues of racial equity and social justice within your agency? Which steps are complete, and which are planned or ongoing?

At NWYS, racial equity, and social justice are at the core of our mission. Many of the young people we serve face additional barriers due to their marginalized identities, which often amplify the challenges of homelessness. While we provide critical support such as supplies, case management, and resource navigation, we understand that youth homelessness cannot truly end without addressing and dismantling systemic inequities.

This year, we prioritized internal growth by conducting cultural competency and diversity training for our staff. Leading this charge is our Cultural Impact Committee, a staff-led body with representatives from each program. The committee is committed to promoting anti-racist practices and cultural proficiency across NWYS, serving as an internal accountability and advisory group. They are also driving the implementation of our agency's strategic plan through staff workgroups, ensuring that anti-racist principles remain at the forefront of our strategic objectives.

5. **Agency Funding.** List your organization's most significant funding sources from greatest to least (including the United Way, Whatcom County Health and Community Services and City of Bellingham); dollar amounts are not necessary. Significant funding sources can be defined as sources that make up more than 15% of your program budget. If you have many funding sources, you may list them by category (i.e., federal, state, foundations, individual donors). Please mention any anticipated or recent changes in your future funding or financial position.



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State - Department of Commerce – OHY
Whatcom County
Federal - RHYA and HUD

We don't anticipate changes in our future funding or changes in our financial position. We recently received news that the state of Washington is awarding us funding to support a contract to expand our housing services for 13-17-year-olds.

PART C: PROGRAM INFORMATION

Please limit your responses to no more than two pages for questions 6-8.

6. **Program Summary.** Briefly summarize the program and its core activities in one or two sentences.

Our services include various levels of housing support, case management, vocational readiness, identity-specific support, restorative justice, and other essential programs designed to meet youth needs. NWYS staff provide services that are low-barrier, youth-specific, and relationship-based, ensuring that youth feel seen and supported.

7. **Program Purpose.** Identify the community need(s) that the program addresses. What are the measurable outcomes that will result from the services provided?

There is a historical gap in dedicated local housing and services for youth. Homeless response systems are rarely set up to accommodate unaccompanied minors or system-involved youth. Young people may run or be removed from a poor housing situation, which brings them into contact with child protective services, law enforcement, or the adult-oriented shelter system. They may also be approached by individuals intending to exploit their desperation for housing and emotional or financial support. An unaccompanied minor may 'age out' into adult homelessness, little better prepared to secure housing at age 18 than they were at age 15.

In Whatcom County, a study examining housing provider capacity indicates that "recent years have brought tremendous strain to organizations and staff providing housing and shelter services in Bellingham, and simply maintaining existing capabilities has been a challenge for many. At the same time, the need for shelter and services has grown." Northwest Youth Services has been able to maintain and expand in some service areas, yet is impacted by these strains at the county and state levels.

The main goals of the NWYS program are to ensure that youth exit a safe, stable housing destination and that they can identify positive adult, peer, and community connections. With a dedicated focus on providing stable housing and fostering meaningful connections, NWYS leverages a robust data-driven approach to deliver impactful, evidence-based services. Our director of Data and Impact collaborates with direct service staff to meticulously track, monitor, and analyze the progress of



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each youth we serve. This
interventions are informed by real-
needs.



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commitment ensures that our
time data and adjusted to meet evolving

Our recent achievements reflect our effectiveness. In 2023, 100% of young adults who completed our Rapid Rehousing program transitioned to safe, stable housing. Furthermore, our employment and education services have supported 64 young people with skill-building activities like GED preparation, resume workshops, and mock interviews, equipping them for sustainable futures.

8. **Program Status.** How long has this program been in operation in Whatcom County? Since your last application, have you made any changes in how you offer services? If this is a new program, how far along is your agency in the planning process? What resources has your organization already invested?

Our organization has been operating in Whatcom County since 1976. Since our last application, we have expanded a few of our existing services. We added our food truck to our Whatcom Street Outreach program. Our Food Truck Program has served 4,115 meals, addressing food insecurity while also distributing essential supplies such as socks, tents, and information on healthcare resources, including nurse support. Additionally, we expanded our Queer Youth Services program by opening a brick-and-mortar and hiring a full-time staff person to oversee and run Queer Youth Services in Skagit County.

In 2025, we plan to continue providing quality and lifesaving care for our young people.



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UNITED WAY FOCUS AREAS

1. To support financial stability in Whatcom County, we have identified three funding priorities below, basic needs, economic mobility, and breaking the cycle of poverty. Choose **one** category below that best aligns with your agency/program:

Basic Needs

- Food security
- Stable, attainable, affordable housing
- Health and mental health care access

Economic Mobility

- Financial literacy and training
- Vocational readiness training and support
- Adult education programs

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

- Affordable child care and early learning programs
- Academic programs to increase student attendance and achievement
- Parenting support
- Addiction treatment and recovery
- Abuse prevention

2. Please describe how your program/agency services align with the category you selected above.

NWYS serves youth and young adults, ages 13-24, who are at-risk of or experiencing a housing crisis in Whatcom, Skagit, or Island County. Through its homelessness prevention and intervention programs, the agency serves over 1,300 young people annually. In Whatcom County during the 2023-year, around 350 unduplicated youth and young adults received services at the Ground Floor Drop-in Center. Roughly 200 new and unduplicated young people (ages 13-25) accessed our outreach services, which covers all geographical areas of the county. Around 115 new youth applied for housing in the 2023 year. Even when young people were not accessing housing services, NWYS connects them with critical services such as case management, basic need supplies, and referrals. NWYS supports each young person in a variety of ways through a wide range of supports such as Education and Employment, Queer Youth Services, Ground Floor,



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PAD, and Outreach to support their immediate needs as they work toward their long-term goals. A majority of youth engaged with NWYS services hold marginalized identities due to the disproportionate harm that BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+, pregnant and parenting, and young people with disabilities experience within social services, systems of care, and in homelessness.

3. Please provide two or three key outcomes you measure that indicate progress toward your mission. List the number of clients being served, what you track, and the most recent results.

From July 1st, 2024, to December 31, 2024, between successful exits within our Whatcom HUSLY emergency shelter, youth served in our Whatcom Transitional Living Program, and those served in our Whatcom Rapid Rehousing Program, 26 youth were assisted in achieving safe and affordable housing. Our Queer Youth Services [QYS] supported 102 youth within the last 6 months of 2024. Queer Youth Services supports young people with gender-affirming clothing, name changes, and resource navigation.

Whatcom Housing prioritizes those who are disproportionately affected by homelessness. For example, 88% of HUSLY participants have a disabling condition, 50% of the clients are a part of LGBTQIA community. The Rapid Re-Housing Program has 60% of its participants be youth of color, whereas 40% are female, 20% are trans female, and the other 40% are male. Ground Floor is a drop-in center where youth can access basic services and resource navigation such as access to showers, laundry, bus passes, access to laptops, etc. Ground Floor, only within the last six months of 2024, has received 401 youth, provided 2108 basic needs, and supported 154 youth who are interested in housing and other programs and services provided by NWYS.

NWYS has launched a food truck which provides meals and resources to people in need in Whatcom County. It has served 3725 meals, provided 25 Narcan to individuals, 28 tents, 33 sleeping bags, and 520 pairs of socks.

4. How does United Way's investment help meet the funding needs of the organization or program? Please give specific examples of how United Way funds are/will be utilized.



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Northwest Youth Services supported 1,205 youth in total with this funding, including providing emergency shelter and housing to youth and young adults, a drop-in space where youth and young adults can access resources, Care Coordination (formerly termed case management), education and employment support services, Queer youth-specific identity-affirming services, court diversion services for youth, and many other services.

NWYS supports clients to end their experience of homelessness by providing housing, as well as coaching support and tenancy skill-building that enable youth and young adults to maintain their housing independently and continue to reach their goals. In 2023, 80% of youth exited the PAD emergency shelter for minors to a safe and stable housing destination. 84% of young adults exited the HUSLY emergency shelter to a stable housing outcome, as did 100% of Rapid Rehousing program participants. Additionally, 90% of youth and young adults exited NWYS Whatcom housing programs with positive adult, peer, or community connections.

5. Briefly describe how your agency/program will utilize community partnerships or coordinate with other agencies (UW partner agencies, other community non-profits, government agencies, local companies, schools, etc.) to advance your work/mission.

Northwest Youth Services (NWYS) has partnered with multiple community partners for the goal of successful outcomes. NWYS has an MOU with Lydia Place on utilizing Preference Based Vouchers for our young adults. We have successfully housed three young adults with the voucher process. We work closely with the Whatcom Homeless Service Center to ensure timely communication of client updates and potential referrals under our MOA. NWYS staff attend meetings with community partners to share data, tracking spreadsheets, and workshop existing structures in place. The Director of Whatcom Housing is also actively a part of the Coordinated Entry Governing Body. Frequent emails, phone calls and meetings occur to ensure knowledge is shared, updates are provided, and new ideas are brought to light.



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6. United Way focuses on ALICE households in Whatcom County. ALICE refers to households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level but not enough to afford the basic cost of living in our community.
 - a. What percentage of your program recipients are below the ALICE threshold based on the survival budget for Whatcom County
98.7%
 - b. What percentage of your program recipients are ALICE (above FPL but below the ALICE threshold)? 7.3%
 - c. Do you collect client data by zip code
We do collect this information by zip code for certain programs.

Visit the [United for ALICE](#) website for the most recent (2024 report) Whatcom County data to determine the survival budget guidelines for ALICE households.

7. Please share an example of a client who was helped by your services.
**Note: if you receive a 2025 Community Impact Grant, this story may be shared on your behalf by United Way for the purpose of our community fundraising. Names and details may be altered for privacy.*

[client] was living at the Northwest Youth Services youth shelter right before his 18th birthday. The staff at the shelter connected with the Housing staff and we were able to schedule an informational meeting, as well as schedule a time to discuss the possibility of moving into HUSLY. This movement seemed supportive for all, so on [client] 18th birthday the HUSLY entry paperwork was completed, and we were able to assist him in moving into the new unit.

[client] was very excited to be in the program and get a room of his own! [client] and his Care Coordinator met frequently and focused on resume building, job applications, cover letters, and budgeting. They also applied for [client] social security card as he didn't have a physical copy. [client] was able to frequently attend the NWYS Youth Action Board and have transportation to and from the meetings.

[client] worked with his Care Coordinator when thinking and looking for housing options after HUSLY. They looked into studio apartments for a while, then [client] was able to accept a referral for Permanent Supportive Housing. [client] stayed on top of the paperwork that was needed for this move and his Care Coordinator was able to attend meetings and ask any questions that they had.

[client] is now living in his own studio apartment and just accepted a job offer! [client] is still meeting with his Care Coordinator to ensure that he has everything that he needs for his unit,



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and they are planning on meeting with the Permanent Supportive Housing Case Manager soon to talk about next steps and goals.

[client] is very hard working and ready to step into this next stage of his life. NWYS will still be a supportive place for him to go for the next few years and he's excited to see what the future holds.

Application Checklist:

The United Way Addendum and all materials listed below must be submitted by **5pm on Thursday, March 6, 2025.**

Please submit all materials by email to hello@unitedwaywhatcom.org