



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: Road2Home

DBA (if applicable): Road2Home

EIN: 84-3552212

UEID (from SAM.gov): U4TKXAJB2493

Mailing address: P.O. Box 3091, Bellingham, WA. 98227

Website: www.road2home.org

General phone: (360) 927-9534

State of Washington Business License Number(s): UBI# 604 532 524

Executive Director (or authorized representative):

Name: Ashley Buerger

Title (if not ED):

Email: ashley@road2home.org

Phone: (360) 927-9534

Application Contact (If different):

Name: Mary Humphries

Title: Director of Philanthropy

Email: mary@road2home.org

Phone: (360) 306-0415

Program Information:

Program Name: Providing Critical Care, Support, and Housing Stability for Unsheltered Individuals and Gardenview Tiny Home Village Guests. This is a general operating support funding request.



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Program Address: 2101 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham, WA. 98225

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?

\$25,000

Total Annual Project Budget:

\$1,333,337

Annual Organizational Budget:

\$1,333,337

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.

The mission of Road2Home is to address housing instability by building community, fostering hope, and creating circumstances for individuals to thrive.

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.

The intent of Road2Home’s programs is threefold: (1) To place individuals in safe, stable housing; (2) To provide trauma-informed services and help our program participants access vital resources (healthcare, food, shelter) and achieve self-identified goals through wrap-around case management services and volunteer ally support; and (3) To build strong, trust-based relationships with clients while also offering socio-emotional support and companionship. These services are provided through our two main programs– Gardenview Tiny Home Village and our Volunteer Ally Program. We annually serve between 850-1,000 single adults, ages 18+ who live in Whatcom County. Many of these individuals are 55+ in age and are managing complex health conditions including physical impairments, chronic and terminal diseases, and mental health and substance use disorders. The individuals who engage in our programs represent a broad spectrum of racial and ethnic backgrounds, gender identities, and life circumstances.

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.

Road2Home has been operating for six years, and over this time has grown substantially in capacity and staffing. We currently have 18 staff and count on dozens of trained volunteers to help us deliver



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program services. Road2Home began providing contract services in 2021 when the Whatcom County Health Department approached us to operate the County's only Covid-19 Isolation and Quarantine Facility (IQF), which we managed successfully for eight months. We also contracted with the County and City of Bellingham to run a Severe Weather Shelter in winter 2022-2023 and again contracted with the City of Bellingham to run a Winter Shelter in winter 2023-2024. We presently have a two-year contract with the City of Bellingham to operate Gardenview Tiny Home Village.

Many of our direct service providers on staff have bachelor's degrees in a variety of academic subjects including Psychology and Sociology, Public Administration, Public Health, Human Services, and Therapeutic Recreation. Our Executive Director, Ashley Buerger, has a master's degree in healthcare administration, extensive knowledge of Road2Home's operations, and many trust-based relationships with community partners. Our Behavioral Health Specialist, Chris Furman, has a master's degree in human service management and plays a pivotal role in providing specialized services to guests at Gardenview Village.

Due to recent organizational growth, we now have a full-time Associate Director of Programs on staff who possesses a Master's Degree in Public Health. We also recently hired a new full-time Associate Director, who joins us with a multitude of critical administrative, technical, and strategic skills. Combined, Road2Home's staff have more than 70 years of experience in the human services sector.

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?

Road2Home is an active network partner of Northsound ACH—an organization dedicated to a just and inclusive culture where individuals thrive—and staff regularly attend their conferences, trainings, and other educational opportunities to learn how to develop and integrate organizational systems and practices that promote belonging and inclusion and help to dismantle systemic racism. As a trauma-informed agency, developing policies and providing person-centered services is the pillar of our racial and social justice work.

We provide guidance and resources to our staff and Board on how to better recognize, react to, and work within a system that is inherently biased towards white, straight, cis-gendered individuals by encouraging them to participate (which they've done) in learning sessions and workshops offered by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), North Sound ACH, and author and speaker, Ryan Dowd.

Service-wise, Road2Home has a low-barrier approach to all the support we provide, which means we do not exclude anyone based on sobriety, income, mental health, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, or identification requirements. We believe this is an important aspect of our work, as many Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), trans, and queer-identifying individuals have faced unfair and unjust barriers that exclude them from receiving vital services.

We are also aiming to recruit BIPOC volunteer allies to pair with BIPOC clients because it is vital for fostering trust, cultural understanding, and shared experiences that can significantly augment support effectiveness. This effort is designed to empower BIPOC clients to navigate pathways



Lastly, we have taken deliberate steps to eliminate barriers in our hiring process by encouraging individuals of color, and individuals with alternative educational backgrounds, including lived experience, to submit job applications even if they don't meet every desired job requirement.

4. **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.

Road2Home's most significant funding source at this time is the City of Bellingham via the contract we've entered to operate Gardenview Village and provide case management services. The following entities are also key funders of ours although none of them make up more than 15% of our organizational budget. They include the Rippleworks Foundation; Lucky Seven Foundation; PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center; First Federal Foundation; major donors, Norcliffe Foundation; the United Way of Whatcom County; the Raynier Foundation; and the Dudley Foundation.

PART C: PROGRAM INFORMATION

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

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

The funds requested will be used to support Road2Home's two main programs: (1) The operation of Gardenview Tiny Home Village and the case management and behavioral health services that we provide to all Gardenview guests; and (2) Our Volunteer Ally Program which provides outreach, community support, and case management services to individuals living on the streets, in cars or encampments, or at Gardenview Village. The work of these two programs is focused on delivering critical supplies—warm clothing, trac phones, phone cards, propane, food, water, tents, and sleeping bags—to vulnerable unsheltered individuals; providing case management services to the sheltered and unsheltered individuals we serve; conducting intake interviews to refer individuals into Gardenview Village or to develop personalized housing plans and goals for guests already at Gardenviews; recruiting, training, and pairing community volunteers (our "volunteer allies") with clients to provide companionship, emotional support, guidance, and help with navigating the daily responsibilities of life; and helping clients overcome barriers to housing by providing access to critical resources—shelter, food, healthcare providers and more—so they are able to improve their well-being and achieve permanent housing success.

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

Road2Home addresses the pressing need for safe, stable housing and comprehensive support services for individuals experiencing homelessness in our community. The rising cost of living, a limited supply of affordable housing, and systemic barriers to accessing resources have created a



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critical housing crisis. This crisis disproportionately impacts individuals with disabilities, those experiencing mental health and substance use disorders, BIPOC individuals, and people with histories of trauma. By providing housing solutions like Gardenview Village and wraparound case management services, Road2Home offers not just a place to stay, but an opportunity for guests to rebuild their lives in a safe, supportive and structured environment.

A key component of Road2Home's approach is its ally program, which pairs trained community volunteers with residents to provide guidance, mentorship, and emotional support. This program addresses the social isolation and systemic barriers that often perpetuate cycles of homelessness. Allies assist individuals with navigating resources such as healthcare, employment opportunities, and housing services while fostering a sense of dignity and connection. By engaging the broader community in this work, Road2Home not only supports individuals but also builds awareness and empathy, creating a more inclusive and resilient community.

The measurable outcomes of Road2Home's services are multifaceted and deeply impactful. For Gardenview guests, success is reflected in increased housing stability, improved mental, emotional and physical health, and progress toward personal goals such as overcoming substance use disorders, adjusting to life off the streets, learning how to interact with others, or reunification with family. Specifically, we aim to achieve a 25% transition rate for residents moving from Gardenview to permanent housing within one year of residency. The ally program's effectiveness is also measured by the number of active ally-guest pairings, volunteer retention rates, # of new allies recruited, and client satisfaction surveys, which track improvements in self-sufficiency and quality of life.

Additionally, Road2Home's street outreach work meets individuals where they are—whether in camps, on the streets, in cars, or other unsheltered locations—offering essential services and compassionate support. This work addresses critical needs such as access to food, hygiene supplies, warm clothing, and connections to healthcare and social service providers. Our outreach case managers build trusting relationships with individuals who are often disconnected from formal systems of care, helping them navigate barriers to housing and resources. By offering consistent support and addressing immediate survival needs, the program not only reduces harm but also fosters pathways toward stability. Outcomes include increased engagement with services, improved health and safety for unsheltered individuals, referrals into Gardenview Village, and a strengthened connection between vulnerable populations and the broader community.

But it doesn't end there. Other outcomes from Road2Home's work include better housing readiness, financial stability and security, and housing retention rates; reductions in chronic homelessness; formation of new, supportive, trusting relationships; improved sense of community, belonging and autonomy; and a decrease in negative bias and attitudes towards homelessness.

On a broader scale, Road2Home contributes to long-term systemic change. By reducing reliance on emergency services, such as hospitalizations and law enforcement interventions, we generate cost savings for the community. Moreover, we cultivate a network of informed, compassionate allies who become advocates for housing justice, amplifying our mission and fostering a collaborative approach to ending homelessness. Through these efforts, Road2Home not only meets immediate needs but also lays the groundwork for a more equitable and supportive community.



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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?

Road2Home is requesting \$25,000 in general operating support and as an organization, we have been operating since 2019. One significant change since our last application is that we now provide comprehensive case management services to unsheltered individuals living on the streets, in encampments, and in cars. We are also piloting an initiative to pair experienced volunteer allies with individuals on the street to offer them both social and emotional support and help them access healthcare, food and financial benefits, and housing resources. In sum, this means that our unsheltered neighbors are not just receiving vital survival items but also getting critical support and services to stabilize their lives and improve housing readiness.



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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.

Road2Home is dedicated to addressing the urgent and ongoing needs of individuals experiencing homelessness in our community. Our programs directly align with the *Basic Needs* category by providing critical support that ensures access to stable, attainable housing and essential health and mental healthcare services. Through initiatives such as Gardenview Tiny Home Village and our Volunteer Ally Program, we create pathways for individuals to transition out of homelessness and into safe, sustainable living situations. At Gardenview, each incoming guest is paired with a case manager who works collaboratively with that guest to design a personalized plan that ultimately prepares them to live autonomously in permanent shelter. Likewise, our Ally Program has an Outreach Case Manager who helps individuals access services and resources that are vital in achieving housing readiness. These efforts contribute to long-term housing stability for previously unsheltered clients.



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We primarily serve older single adults with complex medical conditions, including mental health and substance use disorders, chronic and terminal illnesses, and physical disabilities.

Accordingly, we prioritize healthcare access as a key factor in achieving long-term housing stability. At Gardenview Village, guests receive case management and on-site support from our Behavioral Health Specialist. Our Ally Program connects trained volunteers with individuals experiencing homelessness, helping them access medical, mental health, and substance use treatments. We also partner with local healthcare providers and social services to ensure essential care. By removing barriers to healthcare and providing trauma-informed support, we help break the cycle of chronic homelessness.

Road2Home also addresses food insecurity as part of our holistic approach to basic needs. Many of the individuals we serve struggle with consistent access to meals. Through partnerships with local food banks and meal providers, we help ensure that residents of Gardenview Village have reliable access to food. For individuals living on the streets or in encampments, our volunteers and staff inform them of available food resources and often distribute healthy snacks to those they encounter to alleviate immediate food needs. By integrating housing, healthcare, and food security into our programs, Road2Home effectively supports individuals in their journey toward stability and self-sufficiency.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

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.

Key Outcomes:

1. **Permanent Housing Placements:** In 2024, Road2Home placed a record 26 individuals—65% of total Gardenview Village guests—into permanent housing. All of these individuals transitioned from unsheltered situations to the Village, where they could access stability and support before securing permanent housing. The village typically houses 38 to 40 people at a time.
2. **Total Clients Served:** In 2024, Road2Home provided services to 1,856 individuals, including healthcare, financial benefits, shelter, and food assistance. This total includes those served through the Ally Program (outreach to unsheltered individuals), Gardenview Village, operation of a Winter Shelter, and delivery of street medical services in partnership with the non-profit Whatcom Street Medicine.
3. **Volunteer Impact:** Volunteers are essential to our mission, assisting with client support, transportation, Gardenview Village site maintenance and repairs, fundraising, and street outreach. In 2024, 70 active volunteers contributed 2,770 hours, valued at \$111,575. While



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tracking exact client impact is challenging, we estimate volunteers directly served more than 100 individuals.

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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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United Way's investment will provide essential funding to sustain and strengthen Road2Home's Ally Program and Gardenview Village, ensuring that individuals experiencing homelessness receive the support they need to move toward stability. A significant portion of the funding will go toward staff salaries and benefits for key team members, including the Ally Program Manager, Ally Program Outreach Case Manager, and Associate Program Director. These positions are critical to the success of the Ally Program, which connects trained community volunteers with unhoused individuals, provides mobile case management services, and helps clients access healthcare, housing, and essential resources.

Additionally, United Way funds will be used to purchase basic survival items for individuals living in cars, encampments, or on the streets. These include propane canisters for warmth, prepaid phone cards and tracfones to ensure clients attend critical medical and housing appointments, hygiene kits, blankets, warm clothing, and water. By providing these essential supplies, we help meet immediate needs while building trust and relationships that support long-term stability.

Funding will also support the recruitment, training, and oversight of volunteers, who play a vital role in assisting clients with transportation, healthcare, food, benefits access, and emotional support. Furthermore, United Way's investment will help maintain Gardenview Village, keeping the food pantry stocked and ensuring that tiny homes remain in good repair. With this support, Road2Home can continue to provide stable housing, critical services, and compassionate care to those who need it most.

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.



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Ally Program Partnerships: The Ally Program relies heavily on working with other agencies to help provide care and continuity of services. Bart Hunter, the Program Manager, has worked with the Bellingham homeless community for 9 years and possesses a deep knowledge of local resources and most (if not all) camp communities in Bellingham. He has established relationships and contacts with nearly 50 other service entities in Whatcom County, such as the Opportunity Council, Lake Whatcom Center, PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center, the Whatcom County Coalition to End Homelessness, Lummi Community Services, Whatcom Street Medicine, the Let Everyone Advance with Dignity (LEAD) program, and the Ground Level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) program. We have an MOU with GRACE and the Whatcom Homeless Service Center (WHSC) and collaborate with all the aforementioned groups in caring for, and supporting our clients.

Additionally, since volunteer involvement is central to the Ally Program, we engage with the Whatcom Volunteer Center for recruitment purposes. We also share data and best practices, and seek feedback and guidance from the following entities: Whatcom County Health and Community Services, Unity Care, The Lighthouse Mission, Ferndale Community Services, PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center, the YWCA, and more.

Gardenview Village Partnerships: Road2Home relies on strong community partnerships to ensure the success of Gardenview Village. We currently have a two-year contract with the City of Bellingham to operate the Village and provide case management and behavioral health services. Additionally, we work closely with the Bellingham Housing Authority, private landlords, property management companies, and local housing organizations to help residents transition into permanent housing.

Village staff also collaborate with nonprofit service providers to connect guests with critical resources. Whatcom Street Medicine offers on-site healthcare on Thursdays, including wound care and medical consultations, while Opportunity Council and other partners assist with financial benefits and mental health services. Food security partners, such as local food banks and community meal programs, help keep our food pantry stocked to ensure residents have reliable access to nutritious meals.

Local businesses, faith groups, and volunteers also play a vital role in maintaining and improving Gardenview Village. Local companies donate supplies and materials, faith groups provide meals, and volunteers assist with home repairs, transportation, and guest support. These



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partnerships help us provide a safe, stable environment where individuals can rebuild their lives and work toward long-term housing stability.

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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? **100%**
 - b. What percentage of your program recipients are ALICE (above FPL but below the ALICE threshold)? **0%**
 - c. Do you collect client data by zip code? **No**

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.*

This is a story told by one of our former Gardenview Village guests who now lives in an apartment in the Laurel Forest Building in downtown Bellingham.

I guess my whole story of how I ended up here starts when my best friend and soulmate was taken from me because of a flu shot she received. She unexpectedly had a reaction and died and I was in a state of shock and I wasn't prepared to deal with such a significant loss. I wasn't prepared financially, physically, or mentally and it wasn't long after my loss that me and my kitty became homeless. I was seriously hurting, my heart was broken, and I wanted so badly to join my wife.

I even considered going to Deception Pass and jumping off the bridge, but I had a kitten named Trouble that my wife got and I couldn't abandon our kitty. So, I refrained from taking that last step off the bridge and got a harness and leash and me and Trouble took up residence in my Jeep Cherokee.

We stayed at a couple of parking lots in Bellingham for about a year and a half before Road2home and the Whatcom Homeless Service Center were able to help us out with shelter.



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Until I moved into my Gardenview Village tiny home, I didn't have a clue that there was even a place like this available. I have to say that I am so very grateful for this place and for everything the staff do for me.

When I moved in I was required to visit with a case manager once every other week. Since that started I've received financial assistance, and medicare dentures, glasses, and hearing aids, and my life has become much better. I am able to live with some dignity. I am learning how to cope with my loss and go on living with nobody passing judgment on me.

I had a severe heart attack soon after my referral into Gardenview, but the heart attack was a wake up call and I've quit smoking cigarettes. I don't drink booze, I eat healthier, I sold my jeep and got an e-bike which turns out to be a lot of fun! So I'm getting plenty of exercise and I am really close to getting an apartment.

I am happy, happy now. Thank you for all you do.

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