



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: The Arc of Whatcom County

DBA (if applicable): [Click here to enter text.](#)

EIN: 31-1579359 UEID (from SAM.gov): [Click here to enter text.](#)

Mailing address: 2602 McLeod Road, Bellingham, WA 98225

Website: www.arcwhatcom.org

General phone: 360-715-0170

State of Washington Business License Number(s): [Click here to enter text.](#)

Executive Director (or authorized representative):

Name: Beverly Porter

Title (if not ED): Executive Director

Email: beverlyp@arcwhatcom.org

Phone: 360-715-0170 ext. 306

Application Contact (If different):

Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Title: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Email: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Phone: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Program Information:

Program Name: Parent Support and Training

Program Address: same

Are all program services delivered at this address? Yes No Although we do provide services throughout Whatcom County, traveling and connecting with families in all 8 school districts.



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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?

\$ 20,000.00

Total Annual Project Budget:

\$ 125,000.00

Annual Organizational Budget:

\$ 300,000.00

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 The Arc of Whatcom County is to improve the quality of life, increase the independence and assure the full inclusion in the community of individuals with developmental disabilities.
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.
Our target population is individuals with developmental disabilities, their families and caregivers and children with special health care needs in Whatcom County. The Arc serves over 3,000 people impacted by developmental disabilities. Additionally, around 1,200 children with special health care needs are newly identified each year in Whatcom County.
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.
The Arc of Whatcom County was organized in 1936 by parents of children with developmental disabilities who wanted to increase and improve the services available to their family member. The Arc has a long history of working with community partners to promote full inclusion and is affiliated with The Arc of the U.S. and The Arc of Washington. Local and State agencies supporting developmental disabilities, including DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration, Whatcom County Health Department's Developmental Disabilities Program and the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council, have contracted with us since 1998. All staff are people with disabilities &/or are family members of an individual with developmental disabilities. Additionally, all 84 volunteers trained as Helping Parents are parents of individuals with developmental disabilities. We are the fiscal lead agency for Whatcom Taking Action for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs. As lead agency we have helped build, enhance and maximize community



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partnerships, improve outcomes by the establishment of our county-wide for all children with health concerns. We are a partner in The North Sound Accountable Community of Health, a statewide Medicaid initiative transforming health and community services.

engaging families as partners, & facilitate Single-Entry Access to Services (SEAS) line

Beverly Porter, The Arc of Whatcom County’s Executive Director and Parent Coalition Co-Coordinator, is responsible for project management. Ms. Porter has 30 years’ experience providing support to parent/family groups, promoting self-advocacy and choice for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Ms. Porter also provides services to Senior Family Caregivers, facilitates Parent Provider Training for Medicaid Personal Care and teaches child safety awareness and sexual abuse prevention. **Karlene Umbaugh**, Parent-to-Parent (P2P) Coordinator, is a founding board member and Secretary of FACES NW, a non-profit summer school for children with autism. She is a parent of a young adult with developmental delays and meets the state guidelines as a Parent-to-Parent Coordinator. Ms. Umbaugh was trained as a Helping Parent in 1998 and has presented to regional conferences on parent support and the grief process. **Melissa Abraham**, Parent Coalition Co-Coordinator and P2P Assistant, is the Parent Co-Chair for the Whatcom Infants and Children’s Council and integral with the work of Whatcom Taking Action, especially in the areas of outreach and resource development. She is a parent of a child with developmental delays who graduated from Early Intervention. **Marta Mejia**, Padres a Padres, Latino Community Coordinator, is a veteran helping parent and a strong, consistent presence leading Parent-to-Parent and Padres a Padres events and support meetings. She is a parent of a child with developmental delays and meets the state guidelines as a Parent-to-Parent Ethnic Coordinator.

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?

Our philosophy is one of full inclusion and participation. That takes continuous & deliberate effort to identify systems and processes that exclude people. People with developmental disabilities have needs, wants and dreams like everyone else. They are equal citizens. Along with our staff diversity which requires disability & immigrant experience, our agency by-laws require the board of directors has a minimum of 2 people with developmental disabilities serving as full voting members. Arc membership elects our directors and provides feedback on programs and services. We do not tokenize people or their involvement but intentionally identify power to redistribute it. Disability justice must include racial justice. Ableism is the discrimination of and social prejudice against people with disabilities. Ableism grants credibility and true humanity exclusively to able bodied people and is rooted in an assumption that disabled people require ‘fixing’. Like racism and sexism, ableism classifies entire groups of people as ‘less than,’ and includes harmful stereotypes, misconceptions, and generalizations of people with disabilities. Our staff and volunteers include immigrant families who are able to leverage their personal experience and build trusting relationships. Our work will always continue in creating materials in Spanish and other languages, finding resources in Russian for sharing with and guiding families, providing ASL translation at parent and community events as well as program information in ASL on our website. Our work in equity and inclusion will never be complete and will always remain central to our mission.

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



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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.

state, foundations, individual donors). recent changes in your future funding or

Whatcom County Health Department, Rental Property Income, The Arc of Washington State, & United Way of Whatcom County. We do anticipate funding reductions in the next year as state governments address the impact of budget shortfalls.

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.

Parent Training and Support includes information and education programs, advocacy, monthly support meetings, training events, guardianship supports, and individualized problem solving to improve health and quality of life.

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

Being the parent of a disabled child or a child with a chronic lifelong health condition goes beyond 'ordinary' parenting and can increase the risk of family relationship problems, stress and depression. Although having a disabled child will not inevitably lead to family difficulties, evidence suggests that parents experience exhaustion, stress, isolation, disempowerment and social marginalization. Families frequently report needing information about their child's disability, service options, available resources and supports, and other issues. 82% of families report that their economic security is challenged. 65% report that they don't have enough help in planning for the future. The scarcity of childcare most significantly impacts families furthest from opportunity, including families with disabled children.

Parent-to-parent peer support has existed since the 1920s and is an evidence-based practice for holistic parent centered support. Peer support for parents can be of particular value during specific stressful health care episodes, for example, at diagnosis of a disability or chronic condition. Systematic review of the benefits of peer parenting support on parents' health, well-being, impact on family, and economic and service implications concluded there are four consistent themes that influenced parent experiences: social identity; learning from the experiences of others; personal growth; and supporting others. Our support meetings & workshops promote emotional support (including sharing of feelings), social and practical support, coping models, problem solving skills, and empathetic understanding. Training events build skills in accessing and navigating complex medical and educational services, build connection and belonging between parents, reducing feelings of isolation, enabling the sharing of ideas and strategies to cope with common problems and enhancing self-efficacy.

We know that families of a child with developmental disabilities benefit when parents are able to decrease feelings of isolation and increase connection to other families, build skills to access and



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navigate social and medical systems and shape a secure future for the child. Our ongoing program evaluation measures (1) Parent report of increased knowledge of disability, improved understanding & acceptance of their child's needs, & reduced feelings of isolation; (2) Parent report receiving the necessary level of information and assistance to make them more self-reliant in terms of accessing supports for their child; and (3) Parent report receiving sufficient information to create and build future plans for their child.

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?

Since 1998, we have provided these services through a contract with Whatcom County Health Department. We offer many of our services through both in-person support, and online options, attending special education meetings at all eight school districts, and making home visits throughout rural Whatcom County. We have found this to be important as we work with a wide range of individuals and families who have differing needs regarding their health, transportation, and childcare options. In addition to advocacy appointments with individual families, we have expanded our in-person services by establishing regular 'paperwork' events where families can receive assistance completing applications for DSHS, Social Security, school and special education paperwork, & guardianship and conservatorship court forms. The strength of our programs and services are the staff and volunteers; their lived experience and capability provide a broad base of support and knowledge.



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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.

Being the parent of a disabled child or a child with a chronic lifelong health condition goes beyond 'ordinary' parenting and can increase the risk of family relationship problems, stress and depression. Although having a disabled child will not inevitably lead to family difficulties, evidence suggests that parents experience exhaustion, stress, isolation, disempowerment and social marginalization. Families frequently report needing information about their child's disability, service options, available resources and supports, and other issues. 82% of families report that their economic security is challenged. 65% report that they don't have enough help in planning for the future. The scarcity of childcare & access to early learning most significantly impact families furthest from opportunity, including families with disabled children. Children & Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN, a federal funding designation) require care from a wide array of service providers and as a result, their care is often fragmented. The system is not really designed for families but for providers, and it is complicated and unwieldy,



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even for them. All of these factors limit a family's ability to work, resulting in a loss of income, reduced hours, and time off needed for medical appointments, school special education meetings, and therapies. Our Parent Training and Support activities help families to navigate systems more effectively, learn from the experience of other families, & feel less alone. These supports help parents meet their children's needs more efficiently, and with greater confidence and hope.

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.

646 individuals/families received 2,100 hours of individualized supports. 143 attendees at workshops and training events. 25 helping parent matches = 100% match for all new parent requests. 349 parents attended 28 parent support meetings held virtually and in person throughout Whatcom County. Our workshops and trainings held virtually are recorded making the resources available and accessible to families at their convenience.

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.

The flexibility of United Way dollars allows us to adapt to urgent community needs, freeing staff to respond with customized services. Unrestricted funding allowed us to create a Parent Wellness Class facilitated by a licensed mental health provider. Due to extensive wait lists for mental health providers as well as a limited number of therapists with expertise in developmental disabilities or non-speaking clients, families have inadequate support. We were able to contract with a gifted therapist and offered the class July – September 2024 to provide connection and improved quality of life during the summer break, when many children with special needs cannot access typical summer recreation activities. Unrestricted dollars are also used to hire translators and for non-English speakers and ASL interpreters for Deaf.

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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We collaborate with all 8 Whatcom County school districts, providing parent information and training at each district throughout the school year. We partner with Whatcom Center for Early Learning and Early Intervention Providers at the Opportunity Council, supporting and mentoring parent involvement in county-wide leadership. Staff regularly attend the County Developmental Disability (DD) Advisory Board and we hold a permanent position on the Child and Family Well-Being Task Force, addressing DD issues through the Health Children's Fund. Staff also partner with ChildCare Aware in identifying opportunities to support inclusion and accommodations within childcare providers. Staff also hold positions on our county Infant and Children Council, We are the fiscal lead agency for Whatcom Taking Action for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs. As lead agency we have helped build, enhance and maximize community partnerships, improve outcomes by engaging families as partners, & facilitate the establishment of our county-wide Single Entry Access to Services (SEAS) line for all children with health concerns. We work closely with the SEAS navigators, conducting outreach and taking referrals. Collaboratively, we have built three main programs: SEAS (Single Entry Access to Services) – A gateway for families to access appropriate services for their children with special needs; GIDES (General Interdisciplinary Developmental Evaluation System) – A two-part model consisting of assessment and care coordination; Tools & Resources for Families and Providers. We are a partner in The North Sound Accountable Community of Health, a statewide Medicaid initiative transforming health and community services to: 1) build healthier communities through a collaborative regional approach; 2) integrate the physical and behavioral health system to foster focus on the whole person.

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? Approximately two-thirds of GIDES clients are on Apple Health insurance and thus below the ALICE threshold. Fifty percent of families of children with special health care needs are at or below the ALICE threshold. 54% of adults with DD have social security as their only source of income.
 - b. What percentage of your program recipients are ALICE (above FPL but below the ALICE threshold)? We do not collect income and financial information from clients and have based our percentages above on WA DSHS and Whatcom County Health Department data.



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- c. Do you collect client data by zip code? Not aggregated by zip code and household income.

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.*

We are sharing a video we made with Katie, a parent talking about connection in her journey as a special needs parent.

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