

United Way Funding Opportunity Pathways Home Request for Proposal (RFP)

Summary: Greater Twin Cities United Way is launching Pathways Home, a region-wide initiative to disrupt the pipeline into homelessness for foster youth and adults transitioning from incarceration, to transform the housing system and foster a region where all can thrive.

The first phase of Pathways Home will focus on youth and young adults. This funding opportunity will support a cohort of organizations and partnerships to build their capacity to increase and improve trauma-informed, culturally responsive services that prevent homelessness for **foster youth** transitioning from foster care **and young adults transitioning from incarceration**. Future Pathways Home activities will support all adults transitioning from incarceration.

This funding opportunity is focused on direct service organizations. Organizations that do not provide direct service but are aligned with the goals of this RFP are welcome to apply in partnership with other direct service providers.

Funding will focus on work happening in Hennepin and/or Ramsey County.

Grant sizes will average \$100,000 for a period of 18 months. Funded organizations and partnerships will be part of a cohort that will work together to build organizational capacity and the capacity of the housing system toward expanded services that prevent homelessness for foster youth and young adults transitioning from incarceration.

Applications are due by **Thursday, January 26 at 4pm** in our grant portal. Please visit our [website](#) to begin your application.

Key Dates for Applicants

LOI Opens	Wednesday, January 4 th at 9am
LOI Due	Thursday, January 26 th at 4pm
Applicants Notified of First Round Decisions	Wednesday, March 1 st
Follow Up Interviews Conducted	March 13 th – March 24 th
Applicants Notified of Grant Decisions	March 31 st
Grant Term Begins	May 1st

For more information, contact: rfp@gtcuw.org



Introduction

Greater Twin Cities United Way exists to fuel lasting change toward a community where all people thrive regardless of income, race, or place. Our mission is to unite changemakers, advocate for social good, and develop solutions to address the challenges no one can solve alone.

United Way's Innovation Initiatives

United Way's innovation initiatives are collaborations between nonprofit partners, people with lived experience, government agencies and donors. We identify urgent gaps in our community and foster co-created solutions that drive positive, lasting change. Our innovation initiatives are time-bound, usually five years, and have a goal of accelerating sustainable systems change in our region.

At United Way, our innovation initiatives begin by listening to our community, the experts and the research, co-creating and testing promising models and strategies with our partners and then amplifying and scaling what works to drive results that support lasting change.

Pathways Home

Community members and the 2018 Governor's Housing Task Force identified two highly at-risk populations in our region's homeless population: youth exiting foster care and adults transitioning from incarceration. The data supports this claim—every year in Minnesota, 400 youth age out of foster care on their 18th birthday and by age 21, 41% do not have stable housing¹. In 2021, 25% of people released from Minnesota's correctional facilities were released directly to homelessness.²

While the foster and legal systems³ are different, they both perpetuate trauma for the individuals that experience them. Pathways Home seeks to expand access to trauma sensitive, culturally responsive supports that can mitigate the impacts of trauma, improve health, and create access to employment and education. We believe that unencumbered access to these and other individualized services are the bedrock to achieving successful transitions from systems-involvement to becoming a thriving community member.

Minnesota's housing system is designed primarily to respond to crisis so that most housing resources can only be accessed after someone has become homeless. Even when data clearly indicates a high risk of homelessness for these two populations, there is little in our housing system to prevent this from happening.

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Pathways Home's goal is large-scale change in how services that prevent homelessness for foster youth and adults transitioning from incarceration are *accessed, operationalized and funded* in our region.

This five-year initiative seeks to transform the housing system and disrupt this pipeline into homelessness by preventing, rather than responding to, homelessness for foster youth and adults transitioning from incarceration.

As the housing system changes, we expect to see the rate of foster youth and adults transitioning from incarceration that enter homelessness decrease; the trauma of the homeless experience eliminated; and improved health, employment, and overall stability outcomes for these populations.

The first phase of Pathways Home will focus on youth and young adults. It will build the capacity of non-profits to expand and/or improve services that prevent homelessness for foster youth and young adults transitioning from incarceration. As the initiative progresses, Pathways Home will expand to encompass all adults transitioning from incarceration.

Community Input

Pathways Home is developed with input and feedback from the community and our initiative partners. The Pathways Home Advisory Group is a key part of this development. The Advisory Group includes people with lived experience in the foster and legal systems, government leaders, and direct service providers. The Advisory Group meets monthly to provide insight and input to Pathways Home.

Members include:

- Ariana Guerra, Policy & Advocacy Manager, Foster Advocates
- Curtis Shanklin, Deputy Commissioner of Reintegration and Restorative Services, Minnesota Department of Corrections
- Holly Henning, Associate Director, Ain Dah Yung Center
- Richard Coffey, Chief Programs Officer, 180 degrees
- Richard McLemore, Executive Director, 1 Day At A Time
- Ryn Wessels, Community Board Co-chair, Foster Advocates
- Stevenson Morgan, Employment Coach, Ujaama Place

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Funding Opportunity Overview

Phase one of Pathways Home will bring together a cohort of organizations and partnerships that will work to build their own capacity and the capacity of the housing system toward expanded and/or new culturally responsive, trauma-informed services that prevent homelessness for foster youth and young adults transitioning from incarceration.

Services that are culturally responsive and trauma-informed prevent homelessness every day but are generally not recognized as part of the formal “homelessness prevention” system. Pathways Home seeks a region with a more expansive understanding of homelessness prevention where services can be equitably accessed before housing instability is experienced.

Pathways Home will focus its efforts on services that prevent homelessness that are:

- **Equitable and not reliant on your housing status**—individuals are able to access regardless of their housing status. For example, doubled-up, couch-hopping, temporarily housed through kin networks, etc. would all be eligible for services.
- **Holistic and individualized**—services designed to address the full homelessness prevention needs of the individual with a particular focus on providing whole-person, individualized services. For example, services that include consideration of the participant's physical, mental, chemical health, employment and other needs.
- **Trauma-sensitive**—services that take an approach that recognizes and mitigates the effects of trauma and understands how trauma manifests differently in the foster, legal, and homeless response systems.
- **Culturally responsive and supportive**—takes an approach that values and incorporates the customs, characteristics, experience and perspectives of individuals served.
- **Effective**—services result in housing stabilization for an individual.

Successful applicants will focus heavily on supporting foster youth and/or young adults transitioning from incarceration (as opposed to the general population) and currently provide, or partner to provide, services that prevent homelessness for these groups.

Population Focus

For the purposes of this RFP, Pathways Homes defines its target populations as:

Foster Youth: youth between the ages of 16-25 who were in the child welfare system at age 16 or older.

Young Adults Transitioning from Incarceration: Young adults between the ages of 18-25 who have transitioned out of adult incarceration in the last year.



Partnerships

Organizations may apply for this opportunity individually or in partnership with other organizations. If applying in partnership, each partner organization must commit to the goals, activities and outcomes of the grant program.

One organization should be selected as the “Lead Organization” who will hold and administer the grant funding to partner organizations and coordinate learning and evaluation activities on behalf of the partnership.

Grant Program Activities

Funded organizations and partnerships will commit to an 18-month pilot program with the goal of building the capacity of their organization or partnership to decrease homelessness for foster youth and/or young adults transitioning from incarceration.

Funded organizations and partnerships will be part of a cohort model and work with Pathways Home staff to set goals and a plan for achieving them at the start of the grant period. Pathways Home will launch its first cohort of funded partners in May 2023. Grant funding and cohort activities will run from May 2023 through October 2024.

Pathways Home will support the cohort toward its goals through:

- Grant funding to support programmatic and/or organizational goals
- Technical assistance aimed at identified capacity needs
- Cohort-level technical assistance to support needs identified by the cohort
- At least quarterly peer support, learning, and networking through a Community of Practice
- Bi-monthly check-ins with Pathways Home staff to provide support and collect qualitative progress and learning information.

In addition to working toward greater organizational capacity, the cohort will collaborate with Greater Twin Cities United Way, the Pathways Home Advisory Group, and other stakeholders to work toward large-scale systems change.

Activities will include:

- Co-developing an expanded definition and protocols for "homeless prevention" to advocate for within our housing system.
- Co-developing the direction, strategy and activities of future phases of Pathways Home's work
- Building a case for expanded access and funding through impact data, learnings, and storytelling

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Funding Eligibility

Organizations and partnerships must meet these requirements in order to apply:

- Your organization or lead organization (for partnerships) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization or has a fiscal sponsor who is a 501c3.
- Your organization or partnership works with foster youth and/or young adults transitioning from incarceration as defined in this RFP.
- Your organization or partnership serves at least 50% of individuals that have incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.
- Your organization or partnership will focus its efforts within Hennepin and/or Ramsey for this grant program.
- Your organization or lead organization's (for partnerships) budget for the current fiscal year is \$250,000 or higher.

Important Note on Financial Review: Your organization or lead organization (for partnerships) must meet the financial standards for Greater Twin Cities United Way funded partners based on a review of financial documents such as your most recent financial statements, form 990, and audit (if your organization is required by law to complete an audit) in order to receive funding. **Organizations required to complete an audit MUST have a “clean” (unqualified) audit opinion in order to be eligible for funding under this RFP.** You will be asked to upload financial documents as part of the application. Please note that organizations are only eligible to receive a maximum grant size of up to 20% of their overall organizational budget.

For any special considerations related to these criteria, please contact us at rfp@gtcuw.org to determine your eligibility.

Funding Priorities

These criteria are not required but your application will be scored based on how well it meets these criteria. Organizations that score highest will be most competitive for funding.

- Your organization or partnership serves at least 60% of individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander and/or People of Color.
- Your organization or partnership designs and provides services specifically for foster youth and/or young adults transitioning from incarceration.
- Your organization or partnership holds a strong vision, commitment and passion for developing solutions for trauma-sensitive, culturally responsive services that prevent homelessness for foster youth and/or young adults transitioning from incarceration.



- Your organization or partnership has the capacity and willingness to develop new and/or expand existing services that prevent homelessness for foster youth and/or young adults transitioning from incarceration.
- Your organization or partnership *currently* holds the organizational capacity and readiness to participate in the Pathways Home cohort. Specifically, your organization or partnership has leadership alignment, adequate staff time, strategy alignment, funding, etc. that will maximize your impact toward Pathways Home goals.
- Your organization or partnership is committed to system-level change for the people you support and currently participates in systems change work through coalitions, advocacy or other activities.
- Your organization or partnership uses information to understand its impact, learn and make changes internally and is excited to collaborate and share information and learnings with peers, systems leaders and other stakeholders to create systemic change.
- If applying as a partnership, your partners have a history of collaboration and a clear plan for how you will work together to achieve your goals.

Learning and Evaluation

Pathways Home is a new initiative committed to systemic change, learning, and continuous improvement. Funded partners will work with Greater Twin Cities United Way to understand the impact of Pathways Home on the individuals they support, their organizations, and the housing system.

Greater Twin Cities United Way will build learning and evaluation plans in a way that minimizes the burden on organizations whenever possible and welcomes alternative ways of understanding an organization's impact. Data collection approaches will be developed in conjunction with funded organizations or partnerships and support from Pathways Home evaluation staff will be provided as needed.

A more detailed Evaluation and Learning plan will be shared with funded organizations or partnerships closer to the start of the grant period. In the meantime, grantees should expect to engage in the following evaluation activities over the course of the grant period.



Activity	Frequency	Grantee Engagement
Developmental conversations	Bi-monthly; in conjunction with check-ins with Pathway Home staff.	Share feedback and updates about Pathways Home activities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on Pathways Home model • Progress on organization workplan and goals • Participant success stories • Collaboration and partnerships
Program document review	Spring 2023; start of grant period	Provide documents or descriptions of the following to support technical assistance efforts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, practices, or procedures related to homelessness prevention services • Funding and staffing models, including amount of funding accessed, and sources of funding for homelessness prevention services
Gather participant feedback	To be determined in collaboration with Pathways Home staff	Gather qualitative and/or quantitative data from youth and young adults, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on effectiveness of services and supports • Participant outcomes, including changes in housing stability, service access, social supports, etc.
Bi-annual housing stability data	October 2023; 6 months after grant start April 2024; 12 months after grant start	Submit service access and housing stability data. Required indicators to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of foster youth and young adults transitioning from incarceration served • Participant housing status at 6, 12, and 18 months • Referral and service access data or descriptions • Indicators of participant success (to be developed in collaboration with United Way)
Annual leader and practitioner survey	October 2024; end of grant period	Participate in a survey to assess changes in organizational and practitioner capacity to provide expanded services that prevent homelessness
Final grant report	October 2024; end of grant period	Submit a written report describing program activities, outcomes and learnings. Required indicators to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of foster youth and young adults transitioning from incarceration served • Participant housing status at 6, 12, and 18 months • Referral and service access data or descriptions • Indicators of participant success (to be developed in collaboration with United Way) • Changes in organization practices, policies, and procedures

Application Process

The Pathways Home funding opportunity is a two-step process.

Step 1: United Way will accept online applications from any organization or partnership who meets the eligibility criteria listed above from Wednesday, January 4th – Thursday, January 26th.

Applications will be reviewed and scored by a team of Greater Twin Cities United Way staff and community reviewers against an evaluation rubric. The brief application will ask questions in each of the areas below and weigh them as indicated.

Area of Assessment	% of Total Score
Population's Racial/Ethnic Demographics	10%
Services Designed for Focus Populations	20%
Strong Vision, Commitment and Passion	25%
Services and Models that Prevent Homelessness	15%
Organizational Capacity and Readiness	20%
History of Systems Change Work	10%
Total	100%

Step 2: High-scoring applications will be invited to participate in a video call with the Pathways Home team in mid-March to learn more about the initiative and engage in further discussion about their work.

Funded partners will be determined following video calls. An agenda, discussion questions and information on how Greater Twin Cities United Way will determine funded partners will be shared prior to the video calls.

Applicants will be notified of funding decisions by email in late-March 2023.

Greater Twin Cities United Way reserves the right to make awards that support our cultivation of a balanced grant portfolio that most effectively advances our mission, goals, and priorities. Toward this end, and in addition to criteria identified in this RFP, funding decisions may include considerations of geography, scale and ecosystem factors, among other factors.



Grant Terms and Payments

- Grants will average \$100,000; grant term is 18-months beginning May 2023.
- Grant payments will be made in 3 payments upon signature of the grant agreement. Funded partners will be asked to provide direct deposit information for payment.

How To Apply

Click [HERE](#) to begin your Pathways Home application.

Note: Applications must be submitted via our online portal in order to be considered. Applications emailed to us in another format will not be accepted.

If this is your first time applying for a Greater Twin Cities United Way funding opportunity, please begin by registering for a grant portal account. You will need this account to access the online application. Do **NOT** use the account of an individual who has left your organization, as their account may have been reassigned to them at their new organization. [Click here to register](#). It may take up to 2 business days to receive access to the application, so please plan accordingly.

Application Resources and Other Questions

During the application period, Greater Twin Cities United Way staff are available to answer your questions and assist with your application.

- Contact us at rfp@gtcuw.org and a Greater Twin Cities United Way staff person will respond to your question within 1-2 business days.
- Please see our [FAQ](#) document on our webpage for more information.