



CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT ROUND

Call for Proposals

The UpMobility Foundation (UMF) invites nonprofit organizations in the United States to submit applications for its Capacity Building Grant Round.

Capacity Building grants are designed to support an organization's internal effectiveness and long-term stability *rather than funding a specific program or singular service*.

These **one-time, short-term investments** are intended for non-profit partners – with a specific emphasis on nonprofit partners in the Mohawk Valley – that can clearly articulate a specific organizational capacity gap that aligns with UMF's [funding themes](#). UMF is primarily interested in improving the vitality of the nonprofit ecosystem and assisting organizations by fortifying the infrastructure of their organizations.

Program Overview

The overarching goal of the Capacity Building Grant Round is to strengthen organizational capacity of nonprofit partner organizations by fostering the development of astute leadership and high-functioning boards, providing access to needed professional development for staff, increasing the fundraising capacity of the organization and/or cultivating the development of new revenue streams, enabling the acquisition and implementation of technology and new technology systems, introducing new or improved evaluation or assessment methods, enabling strategic planning, master planning, or visioning processes, improving communications, supporting rebranding initiatives or improving external relations, and other key operational functions that will improve the stability, vitality, and sustainability of nonprofits.

It is strongly recommended that all proposed activities represent a strategic priority of the organization (preferably as highlighted in the organization's strategic plan) and have the support of the organization's Board, CEO/President/Executive Director, and their senior leadership team.

Capacity Building Grants will be **one-time, short-term investments** designed to support an organization's internal effectiveness and long-term sustainability. **Requests for strictly programmatic support are not eligible.** Short-term grants are defined as two-to-three-year investments in nonprofit organizations. While UMF may elect to maintain a continued relationship with a nonprofit partner to support other priorities, UMF will not provide ongoing operating support nor will it engage in long-term commitments for capacity building beyond the initial term of the grant.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization, an organization with a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor, or a faith-based organization seeking support for projects/programs that address non-religious needs or issues, serving diverse constituencies without regard to religious affiliation. Governmental organizations (i.e., towns or school districts) are also eligible.
- Applications are welcomed from local, regional, or national organizations. Special consideration will be given to projects based in the Mohawk Valley, generally defined as projects in Herkimer and Oneida Counties, or projects from outside the Mohawk Valley that are seeking to bring proven best practices to our local community.
- UMF does not fund animal welfare organizations.

Important Dates

One small round will be held early in 2026 for nonprofit organizations who have ready-to-launch projects. A larger second round will be held in the fall after outreach to nonprofit partners has been completed.

The first grant round will open on April 1, 2026 at 8:00am and will close on April 30, 2026 at 11:59pm. Decision notifications will be made by the end of May 2026.

The second grant round will open on October 1, 2026 at 8:00am and will close on October 31, 2026 at 11:59pm. Decision notification will be made by the end of December 2026.

Late submissions will NOT be accepted.

Opportunity Details

Capacity Building Grants will be **one-time, short-term investments** designed to support an organization's internal effectiveness and long-term sustainability rather than provide programmatic support. This program is intended for nonprofits that can clearly articulate a **specific capacity gap** that aligns with UMF's specific funding themes.

Supported activities could include the following types of work, however this list is not intended to be exhaustive. UMF will consider a wide range of activities, provided an applicant can articulate in specific terms how the proposed work will strengthen the organization and build capacity.

- **Technology development** including the introduction of artificial intelligence to increase efficiency, automate administrative tasks, or the development of processes to use predictive analytics, audits of technology needs, database design and/or acquisition and implementation, cybersecurity updates, software or program acquisition and implementation, and training.
- **Operations improvements** including CRM acquisition and implementation, finance or grants management software purchase and implementation, legal support or compliance activities, and other infrastructure needs.
- **Social enterprise development** including business plan development, market analysis, financial modeling, legal consultation/support, and facilities assessment.
- **Partnership development** including the development of joint programming to expand a nonprofit's reach, introduce a regionalization service delivery model, the development of models that enable sharing data and information in real time, or developing evidence-based programs and assessment practices with partners.
- **Financial planning and fundraising development** including feasibility studies, business model planning, risk assessments, fundraising strategy development, wealth screens, case statement development, revenue planning, and short- and long-term financial forecasting.
- **Expansion planning** of high-quality, tested programmatic models that can be replicated in new communities, with a particular focus on bringing said models to the Mohawk Valley.
- **Strategic planning** including stakeholder needs assessment, SWOT analysis and scenario planning, and strategy development.
- Improved **communications and marketing** processes including branding/rebranding, web design/redesign, market/target audience analysis, and strategic communications plan development.
- **Human resource** planning and assessment including staff recruitment and talent pipeline development, culture building, policy/process/infrastructure assessment, and performance management and coaching.
- **Staff, board, and leadership development** including organizational assessments and succession planning, leadership training, planning or organizational development sabbaticals for executive leadership, board training, development or recruitment, or organizational structural redesign.

All proposals must include **metrics** that will be used to track the work. Proposals should include both short-term milestones that help UMF understand progress made on the workplan as well as long-term metrics that demonstrate the expected improved outcomes related to capacity, sustainability, or increased ability to serve the community.

Applicants are encouraged but not required to include dissemination plans in their applications that describe how the organization intends to share developed best practices with other nonprofit organizations.

Anticipated awards will be approximately **\$100,000** with award terms to be **two to three years**. Payments will be made in **installments contingent on acceptable progress reports**.

Application Details and Instructions

All applications must be submitted through the UMF [grants portal](#). The application will be available at 8:00am on April 1 and October 1. Applicants will not be able to access the application prior to that time, however a detailed description of all application sections can be found below:

Organizational Overview - Required

(Character Limit: 5,000)

Applicants are asked to provide a brief overview of the organization, including its mission statement, history, description of the communities and populations served, and a description of programming provided.

Executive Summary - Required

(Character Limit: 2,500)

Applicants are asked to provide a summary of the proposed initiative. While the UMF Board retains final decision-making authority, Foundation staff conduct an initial review of all proposals and make funding recommendations. Executive summaries are provided to the Board during their final deliberations. As such, it is recommended that summaries clearly but succinctly describe the specific capacity gap being addressed and outline the work being proposed to address the identified gap.

Initiative Description - Required

(Character Limit: 10,000)

Applicants will be required to describe the goal of the proposed initiative and to describe how the intervention will build capacity. Applicants are asked to provide a detailed description of the capacity gap being addressed and why it exists. Applicants are encouraged to describe any assessment or reviews that took place to identify this gap and what role the board, staff, clients/consumers/customers, and other stakeholders had in the conception and development of this initiative. Applicants are encouraged to describe any previous work completed to address the capacity gap and/or explain why the organization is unable to address the issue without an investment from UMF. Organizations are also encouraged to discuss why the initiative is needed at this time. If the work will result in any externally facing changes, applicants should describe how those changes will be socialized to the board, staff, clients/consumers/customers, the community, and other stakeholders. As previously noted, Capacity Building Grants will be one-time investments. Applicants must explain how the proposed work is appropriate and will have a substantial impact as a one-time investment from UMF.

Methods - Required

(Character Limit: 10,000)

Applicants are asked to provide a detailed workplan with the specific steps or activities described, preferably in chronological order. If applicable, include information about consultants, vendors, or products being used to support the work, to include a description of the bid, interview, evaluation, and/or selection process.

Personnel – Required

(Character Limit: 10,000)

UMF believes that capacity building work cannot be the responsibility of one person. Rather, it should be the collaborative work of an integrated team. Applicants are asked to list who will make up the project team and describe each team member's specific roles and responsibilities related to the initiative. Applicants should be able to explain: how the board will be involved and how they will monitor progress; the role of the CEO/Executive Director and senior leadership as it relates to the project; how staff will manage the work of the initiative along with their regular duties; the role and scope of work for any consultants or outside vendors; and, how volunteers and other stakeholders will be involved.

Budget and Budget Narrative – Required

Character Limit: 7,500

Applicants will be asked to complete a table with a three-year line-item budget. Grants will be awarded installments. Applicants should develop multi-year budgets which dovetail with the project methods.

Applicants will also be asked to provide a budget narrative (with a 7,500 character limit) that provides additional detail about each budget item, explains how it ties to the capacity building activities, and provides any additional context that helps UMF understand the proposed project costs.

A wide variety of budget items will be permitted. However, UMF will not fund building or major renovation projects nor will it consider any requests in which grant funds will be used to eliminate or reduce organizational debt. Requests for bridge loans or grants will not be considered.

Additionally, while salary requests will be allowed, those requests should be limited to salary that provides temporary budget relief, enabling existing staff to work on the proposed project during the grant period. If requesting funding for new positions, applicants MUST directly address how this position will be sustained after the grant term without grant support in the sustainability section and/or why the position is not needed after the grant concludes.

Collaboration

Applicants will be asked to complete a table that lists any collaborating organizations and describe the nature of their collaboration. *UMF prioritizes partnerships and collaborative work.* Applicants are encouraged to include information about partnerships and collaborative work.

***Funding Theme* – Required**

(Character Limit: 5,000)

Applicants must select at least one of UMF's funding themes and explain how the proposed initiative *directly* addresses the selected thematic area(s). Applicants may select multiple funding themes but must provide a rationalization for how the work ties to that theme for each theme selected.

***Evaluation Plan* – Required**

(Character Limit: 10,000)

Applicants must describe how they will measure or monitor progress toward the initiative's goals. Applicants are asked to identify *quantifiable* indicators/milestones that will be used to gauge progress. Be mindful that these indicators must be addressed in all annual and final reports to the Foundation and will be used to approve the release of additional installment payments. Applicants must also include long-term indicators that demonstrate the development of improved capacity. Applicants are also encouraged but not required to include dissemination plans that describe how awardees can share best practices developed during the grant period with other organizations.

***Sustainability* – Required**

(Character Limit: 7,500)

If the proposed activities will require additional funding after the grant concludes, applicants must describe the organization's plan for securing additional funding. If the applicant intends on fundraising to sustain the work, a fully developed fundraising plan should be included. If the proposed activities will not require additional funding or will be incorporated into the organization's operating budget, applicants are asked to explain how the activities will be self-sustaining or what adjustments will be made to the operating budget to incorporate ongoing costs. If requesting funding for new positions, applicants **MUST** directly address how this position will be sustained after the grant term without grant support and/or why the position is not needed after the grant concludes.

Addenda

(Upload Limit: 25 MiB)

Applicant may elect to include additional files or addenda related to the project. Appropriate documents include quotes, scope of work documents, letters of support or memorandum of agreements, letters from board members, clients, consumers, customers, or stakeholders, or other materials that will help UMF better understand your project.

Frequently Asked Questions

(This section will be updated regularly.)

If we apply in the April round and are not awarded a grant, may we reapply in the October round?

Yes.

If we are awarded a grant in the April round, can we also apply for funding in the Coalition Building round?

You may apply, however, the application will receive additional scrutiny as multiple awards may be viewed as creating dependency on UMF for funding.

Will UMF provide feedback on proposals they decline to fund?

Yes. All applicants will be scored with an internal rubric. While specific rubric scores will not be shared, UMF staff will provide feedback on the proposal and discuss any concerns raised by staff or the Board during the review process.

Will UMF review a proposal prior to submission?

Yes. Applicants are strongly encouraged to schedule a call or meeting with UMF staff to discuss the proposed idea. UMF will also complete a detailed review of draft proposals. If a review of a proposal is requested, please send the proposal to UMF staff at least two weeks ahead of the deadline.

Collaboration and partnerships are mentioned as an important part of this grant round. How does this differ from what you are looking for in the Coalition Building Grant Round?

Fostering partnerships and collaborative work among our nonprofit partners remains a priority for UMF. The Coalition Building Grant Round is intended to create long-term coalitions or partnerships that will lead to systems-level change. Alternatively, partnerships and collaboration within the Capacity Building Grant Round can be short-term collaborative relationships that exist for the purposes of executing a piece of your capacity building initiative and/or could be the development of partnerships that are not necessarily focused on systems-level change.

Are current grantees eligible to apply?

Yes. However, UMF will continue to review all proposals from the perspective of minimizing dependency on the Foundation for funding. Applications from current grantees will undergo an extra layer of review. If an applicant is a current grantee, the organization should include a rationalization as to why a second grant is not creating dependence on UMF, why the capacity building project is appropriate as a one-time intervention, and if the capacity building project and the previous grant align. If there is alignment, the applicant should explain how the two projects are mutually supporting each other but are not duplicative. As noted above, we strongly suggest that prospective applicants schedule a meeting to discuss their projects with UMF staff.