



COALITION BUILDING GRANT ROUND

Call for Proposals

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

Coalition Building grants are designed to support the development of coalitions or partnerships that will develop a cogent, comprehensive, and actionable plan for a [systems-level change](#) with significant potential to address an issue that falls within one of UMF's [funding themes](#).

Proposals should articulate how the activities will position participating organizations to better address the root causes of a significant social issue *rather than funding a specific program or singular service*. These **one-time investments** are intended for two or more partner organizations – with a specific emphasis on nonprofit partners in the Mohawk Valley – that can jointly and clearly articulate a problem, their shared vision for how to address the problem, a clear approach or intervention, and the intended impacts of the proposed activities. Coalitions developed under this grant program should be created with the intention of establishing a long-term partnership that addresses the systems that produce, reinforce, or influence chronic, persistent, and complex problems. The proposed activities should promote long-term change, promote bold thinking, and facilitate coordinated action. Investments may be made locally, regionally, or nationally, however special consideration will be given to applicants from or impacting the Mohawk Valley, generally defined as Oneida and Herkimer Counties in New York.

Program Overview

Coalitions and partnerships are at the core of all UMF activities. The Foundation's mission speaks directly to the importance of partnerships: ***We activate networks and cultivate partnerships to spark innovation, scale solutions, and uplift lives.*** The overarching goal of the Coalition Building Grant Round is to support the development of coalitions or partnerships that will develop a cogent, comprehensive, and actionable plan for a systems-

level change with significant potential to address an issue that falls within one of UMF's [funding themes](#).

A [systems change approach](#) is one way to address complex problems. It involves taking a holistic view of a social problem and working to shift the deeper structures that keep it in place – things like policies, practices, resource flows, relationships, power dynamics, and mental models. This kind of change can only happen through **deep collaboration** among those working **across sectors** as well as involving those who have experienced the issue firsthand in the development and implementation of the proposed solution. By focusing on causes rather than consequences, changemakers can co-create solutions that are more just, effective, and enduring.

Coalition Building Grants will be one-time investments designed to position multiple organizations to address a **significant social issue** using a **systems-change approach**. Proposals should present a plan that details the strategy and implementation requirements needed to position all participating organizations to execute a systems-level change. **Systems-level change is defined as a fundamental shift in structures, policies, power dynamics, and mindsets that create and sustain complex social problems.** Coalitions will address root causes of the issue, *with a particular focus on problems that arise from the relationships and interactions between different parts of our social systems.*

UMF invites applicants to explore materials about systems-change approaches prior to developing their grant applications. Suggested reference materials include:

[What is system change?](#) – The Skillman Foundation

[Stories of Change: How a Systems Change Approach is Transforming a Region and Systems Change](#) – Rotary Charities (includes examples of place-based systems change)

[Three Keys to Unlocking Systems-Level Change](#) – Stanford Social Innovation Review

[Putting Systems Thinking into Practice](#) – FSG

[Navigating systems change: 5 approaches for impact](#) – ResoPartner

[Systems Practice: Learn to use a systems thinking approach to move from “impossible” to impact](#) – a free, online, eight-week course from Acumen Academy

[Systems Change Masterclass](#) – a free, online, self-paced course from Ashoka

[Systems Change Lab](#) – Mississippi State University

[Measuring impact in networks 101](#) – iac Berlin

Awards will be two-to-three-year investments in a coalition. While UMF may elect to maintain a continued relationship with one or more nonprofit partner(s) involved, UMF will not provide ongoing operating support nor will it engage in long-term commitments for coalition building beyond the initial term of the grant. If ongoing funding is required, applicants must include a comprehensive sustainability plan that details how the partnership will fund ongoing activities.

Eligibility

- Applications must be submitted by a **single trusted organization** who will retain fiduciary and contractual responsibility for the program.
- The lead organization 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.
- Collaborating organizations do not need to be 501(c)(3) tax-exempt or governmental organizations. Coalitions may include for profit organizations, B corporations, advocacy groups or organizations, hybrid institutions, tribal governments, or organizations that fall under different IRS tax classifications.
- Applications are invited 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.
- UMF does not fund animal welfare organizations.

Important Dates

There will be ONE coalition building grant round held in 2026

The grant round will open on June 1, 2026 at 8:00am and will close on June 30, 2026 at 11:59pm. Decision notifications will be made in mid-September 2026.

Late submissions will NOT be accepted.

Opportunity Details

Coalition Building grants are designed to support the development of coalitions or partnerships that will develop a cogent, comprehensive, and actionable plan for a systems-level change with significant potential to address an issue that falls within one of UMF's [funding themes](#). Awards should result in the development of new or substantive changes to existing **collaborative relationships** that will enhance the nonprofit organization's ability to address root causes of social problems while also amplifying the impact of UMF's investments.

UMF will consider a wide range of activities, provided an applicant can articulate in specific terms how the proposed work will strengthen or build coalitions/partnerships, address the root causes of a social issue, scale solutions, and improve the nonprofit ecosystem.

Success applicants must address the following components:

- Grant activities will create or develop **coalitions, collaborations, or partnerships** or will significantly enhance the further development of existing partnerships that will implement a **systems-change** or **social innovation strategy** that will address the root causes of societal issues.

- Coalitions, collaborations, or partnerships must be led by a **single trusted organization** who will retain fiduciary and contractual responsibility for the program; however, sub-grants or contracts are permitted.
- Both planning and implementation requests will be permitted. Multi-year requests are encouraged.
- Applicants should articulate a clearly defined problem statement, the coalition's shared vision, an explanation as to why all organizations involved are well-positioned to address the issue, a detailed plan that describes that approach, a detailed and evidence-informed rationale for the approach, and an explanation of the intended impacts, including the expected short- and long-term outcomes.
- The grant program will favor the establishment of coalitions that will continue well after the grant period ends. If the coalition or partnership is intended to be a short-term or time limited arrangement, applicants should provide a rationalization for why this arrangement is appropriate.
- 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 address root causes of social problems:
 - Create and convene cross-sector networks to share information, develop new data or information collection methods, processes, or databases;
 - Explore root causes of social problems, develop a shared understanding of the systems impacting said problem, and identify promising solutions for intervention;
 - Coalition-wide exercises to complete a system analysis, systems mapping, or landscape analysis of a particular issue;
 - Test and scale new collaborative interventions;
 - Design or carry out systems-change interventions that reasonably have the potential for creating large-scale outcomes or impacts and long-term solutions;
 - Create collective assessment practices or new standards for collective data or information collection, establish data sharing practices within the coalition, and adopt continuous improvement practices across the coalition;
 - Advocacy work to change public policy or increase public support and resource flows or mobilize funding for a particular issue;
 - Communications or story-telling work to change public narratives about a particular issue or raise awareness about a social problem with the intention of shifting relationships and power dynamics;
 - Establish innovative means to involve stakeholders who have lived experiences to participate in the coalition, create inclusive decision-making structures, and develop interventions;
 - Training, coaching, or facilities processes to strengthen the coalition;
 - Strategic alliance development for organizations that provide similar services, administrative consolidations (i.e., shared finance or HR departments), mergers,

resources partnerships (i.e., shared space, shared IT resources, etc.), or dissolution planning.

- If consolidations or shared services are proposed, applicants **MUST** articulate the impact of these consolidations on clients, consumers, or customers and how these consolidations are ultimately addressing a systems-level approach.
- Applicants are encouraged to – either prior to submission or as part of the planning period – complete a landscape analysis/assessment, environmental scan, market mapping, gap analysis or other assessment processes as appropriate. The results should clearly demonstrate the need for the proposed activities and support the applicant’s rationale for the feasibility of the activities.
- Applicants **MUST** include a description of the organizational and governance structure used to oversee the coalition and provide a framework for how the roles of each participating organization. All proposed organizational and governance activities must be positioned to build relationships based on trust and transparency. Coalition applications should include letters of support, memoranda of agreements or understanding, statements of work, or other documents that outline the roles, responsibilities, or expectations of participating individuals or organizations.
- Applicants **MUST** describe how the community and stakeholders will be engaged in the activities and provide a communications strategy. Providing evidence of stakeholder support or involvement is strongly encouraged by submission of letters of support, memoranda of agreements or understanding, statements of work, or other documents.
- 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 systems changes, the vitality of the nonprofit ecosystem, or increased or improved 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.

Investments may be made locally, regionally, or nationally, however special consideration will be given to applicants from or impacting the **Mohawk Valley**, generally defined as **Herkimer and Oneida Counties** in New York.

Anticipated awards will be approximately **\$100,000** with award terms to be **two to three years**. Payments will be made in **installments** that will be paid **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 June 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 an overview of the lead organization to include its mission statement, a brief history, a description of the communities and populations served, and a description of programming offered. Include a description of characteristics of the organization that make it appropriate to lead the proposed coalition.

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 issue being addressed and outline the systems-level work being proposed.

Coalition Partners - Required

(Character Limit: 5,000)

Please list all organizations who are formally part of the coalition or partnership. Identify the lead organization and why the organization was selected to lead the coalition. Describe the roles of all partner organizations. Identify the type of organization (i.e., nonprofit, for profit, association, etc.).

Coalition Governance – Required

(Character Limit: 10,000)

Applicants must include a description of the organizational and governance structure used to oversee the coalition and provide a framework for the roles of each participating organization. Describe how key decisions will be made. Applicants are encouraged to provide details, as applicable, on subjects such as charter documents, contracts, or memoranda of agreements/understanding, the roles and responsibilities of each organization, bylaws or written procedures, work groups or committees created to support the initiative, meeting structure and cadence, etc.

Preliminary Work – Required

(Character Limit: 7,500)

Applicants are asked to describe any preliminary work completed prior to the submission of this proposal that helped craft the development of the initiative. How was the coalition formed and what organization led the initial discussions? Why were partner organizations selected? What assessment processes were completed before submission of this proposal? Applicants are encouraged to – either prior to submission or as part of the planning period – complete a landscape analysis/assessment, environmental scan, market mapping, gap analysis or other assessment processes as appropriate. If such work has

happened, describe the results and explain how they clearly demonstrate the need for the proposed activities and support the applicant's rationale for the feasibility of the activities.

Initiative Description - Required

(Character Limit: 10,000)

Describe the overarching goal of the initiative and provide a rationale as to why the described activities will result in a systems-level change or introduce social innovation strategies to the community. Articulate a clearly defined problem statement and the shared vision of the coalition. Describe why all organizations are well-positioned to address the issue. Describe - *as specifically as possible* - the approach or intervention, to include a detailed and evidence-informed rationale for the approach and the intended impact, including the expected short- and long-term outcomes. If consolidations or shared services are proposed, applicants **MUST** articulate the impact of these consolidations on clients, consumers, or customers. Applicants **MUST** describe how the community and stakeholders will be engaged in the activities. Applicants are encouraged to include a description of the coalition's communications strategy. Coalition building investments are **one-time** investments that are intended to address complex social issues. Explain how this investment will be appropriate as **one-time** intervention.

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)

High-functioning coalitions require the work of teams with dedicated leaders. Coalition teams often include staff, board, volunteers, and occasionally outside consultants. Please describe: Who will make up the core project team and their roles and responsibilities related to the initiative; How existing staff involved in the project will handle their responsibilities related to this initiative in addition to their current duties; The specific scope of work of the outside consultants and vendors; How the Boards of the coalition's organizations will be involved and how they monitor the progress of the initiative; and, How volunteers and other stakeholders will be engaged in the work.

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 that 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 coalition building activities, and provides any additional context that helps UpMobility 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.

Payments for services rendered from collaborating organizations that are not 501(c)(3) tax-exempt or governmental organizations are allowed. *However, all organizations receiving a subgrant from the lead institution must be a 501(c)(3) organization.* Payments to for-profit organizations for services rendered, staff time, and other activities are permitted. Consultants are allowable expenses.

Collaboration – Required

Applicants will be asked to complete a table that lists the coalition organizations and describes the nature of their collaboration. *UMF prioritizes partnerships and collaborative work.* Applicants are encouraged to include information about partnerships or collaborations with individuals and organizations who are not formally part of the coalition as well.

Funding Theme – Required

(Character Limit: 5,000)

Applicants must select one or more of UMF's funding themes and explain how the proposed initiative *directly* addresses the selected thematic area(s).

Evaluation Plan – Required

(Character Limit: 10,000)

Applicants must describe how they will measure or monitor progress toward their 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 systems-level change and the improved vitality of the nonprofit ecosystem. Describe the continuous improvement process to be implemented, to include

the processes or mechanisms that will help the coalition adapt to changing conditions. 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 to sustain the coalition, applicants must describe the organization's plan for securing additional funding. If the proposed activities will not require additional funding, describe how they will be incorporated into the participating organizations' operating budget, or will result in budgetary relief or savings, applicants are asked to explain how the activities will be self-sustaining or what adjustments will be made to the operating budget(s) to incorporate ongoing costs. If the coalition is engaging in advocacy work to increase resource flows, provide estimations of increased resources that will be available. 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 applied for or were awarded a capacity building 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 create dependent on UMF for funding.

Will UMF provide feedback on proposals they decline to fund?

Yes.

Will UMF review a proposal prior to submission?

Yes. Applicants may also schedule call with UMF staff to discuss the idea.

Collaboration and partnerships are mentioned as an important part of the Capacity Building 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 remain 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.

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 coalition 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.

What are some examples of unallowable costs?

UMF will not fund the following:

- Capital, building, or renovation projects;
- Bridge loans or grants;
- Contributions to an organization's endowment;
- Work that took place prior to the start date of the award or after the grant formally concludes;
- Debt service or unpaid or past due invoices or bills;
- Gifts or personal items;
- Grants to meet the short-term emergency needs of clients, consumers, customers (i.e., rent utilities, food, clothing).