



# REIMAGINE & REVITALIZE 2026 NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The Council  
*In partnership with*

*United Way of Greater Waterbury*

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## A. BASIC INFORMATION

The Social Equity Council (“the Council”) promotes equitable economic prosperity by supporting Social Equity Entrepreneurs and reinvesting in communities most impacted by the war on drugs to help them thrive and prosper.

<b>Program: Reimagine &amp; Revitalize (R<sup>2</sup>) Program</b>	
Announcement Type	Notice of Funding Opportunity (NoFO)
Funding Opportunity Title	Reimagine & Revitalize (R <sup>2</sup> ) 2026-2029
Objective	To identify and award three-year funding to Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) whose proposed initiatives align with one or more of the Council’s established program priorities.
Program Overview	The Council’s <b>R<sup>2</sup> Grants</b> will strengthen targeted communities and create new opportunities for residents.
Funding	\$36 million over three years
Minimum Award Size	\$75,000 (over a three-year period)
Maximum Award Size	\$300,000 (over a three-year period)
Eligible Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nonprofit CBOs with 3 or more years of experience providing programs aligned with one or more of the program priorities.</li> <li>- Nonprofit registered to conduct business in the state of CT</li> <li>- Organizations who are located in and providing services in R2 Region.</li> </ul>
Eligible Project Types/Program Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Economic Development (Workforce Development &amp; Infrastructure)</li> <li>- Reentry Initiatives (Adult &amp; Justice Impacted Youth)</li> <li>- Youth Initiatives</li> </ul>
Submission Deadlines	Completed Application must be received by July 15, 2026.
Contact Information	<a href="mailto:R2Waterbury@unitedwaygw.org">R2Waterbury@unitedwaygw.org</a> ; 203-757-9855 x126

## 1. Funding for R<sup>2</sup>

The Council's R<sup>2</sup> Program is funded through licensing fees and revenues generated from Connecticut's adult-use cannabis market and dedicated to social equity initiatives. These funds are administered by the Council to support community reinvestment, workforce development, and technical assistance along with other initiatives consistent with the purposes of the Council.

## 2. Funding Distribution

Investments will be directed to the following 10 regions across Connecticut (R<sup>2</sup> Regions):

1. Bridgeport
2. Danbury
3. Hartford/East Hartford
4. Meriden
5. New Britain
6. New London/Norwich/Windham
7. New Haven/East Haven/West Haven
8. Norwalk
9. Stamford
10. Waterbury

These 10 regions account for 194 out of 237 disproportionately impacted areas (DIAs) census tracts across the state. Funds will be distributed periodically across the three-year period to better enable CBOs program impact.

## **B. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

### 1. Background

The Council's R<sup>2</sup> Program is a competitive grant program administered by selected grant managers to support community-based initiatives in municipalities and neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs. The program provides funding to eligible organizations to implement projects focused on long-term community revitalization. Through strategic investment and oversight, the R<sup>2</sup> Program advances Connecticut's social equity objectives by strengthening local capacity, addressing historical inequities, and fostering inclusive economic growth.

The Council's R<sup>2</sup> Program commits \$36 million over three years to advance equitable economic growth and transformation across ten priority regions in Connecticut: Bridgeport, Danbury, Hartford/East Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven/East

and West Haven, New London/Norwich/Windham, Norwalk, Waterbury, and Stamford. The R<sup>2</sup> Program operates under the Equitable Evaluation Framework, aligning investments with the Council's strategic priorities of Economic Development, Reentry Initiatives (for justice-impacted youth and adults), and Youth Initiatives.

## 2. Programming Expectations

Overall, all CBOs granted funding under the R<sup>2</sup> program shall comply with the following requirements:

- **Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusion:** acknowledge and respect the diverse backgrounds and experiences of individuals receiving services. The proposal should demonstrate cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in their proposed strategies to ensure equitable access and support for all participants.
- **Outcome Evaluation and Continuous Improvement:** conduct ongoing evaluation, data collection, and continuous improvement to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of their programs.
- **Sustainability:** consider program sustainability beyond the grant's support and should structure their proposals to ensure that their programming can continue after R<sup>2</sup> funds are exhausted.

## 3. Restrictions on Funding

Funding will be awarded to entities located in and that serve primarily residents of the R2 region.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of services, activities, goods, and other costs that cannot be supported through this NOFO:

- Loan Fund (create/replenish)
- Lobbying
- Payment of taxes
- Subsidizing a business
- Refinancing or restructuring existing debt
- Relocation of a business
- Personal loans
- Fundraising events
- Research and development (Limited data collection, surveys, or community feedback activities directly related to program evaluation and measuring outcomes are allowable expenses.)

- Political campaigns
- Fines or penalties
- Out-of-State travel

Any other activities are subject to approval by the Council at its sole discretion.

#### 4. Eligible Use of Funds

- Salaries and fringe
- CBOs direct program expenses
- Stipends may be used by CBOs for eligible costs relating to eligible expenses that have been previously identified as part of the application and grant funding proposed budget.
- Mileage expenses are limited to direct program costs and attendance to mandatory grant events
- Administrative costs (maximum of 10% of award)

All costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the CBOs program. The applicants should fully explain and justify the need for expenses within their program design and the narrative of their proposed budget. The Council retains the right to determine the allowability and reasonableness of proposed expenditures.

### **C. Availability of Funds**

The Council plans to invest \$36 million in R<sup>2</sup> programming in years 2026 through 2029. Through R<sup>2</sup>, the Council will provide grants supporting long-term initiatives and offer capacity building training to help the CBOs become self-sustaining. This funding opportunity is anticipated to provide approximately 18 grants to each region, allowing an investment of approximately \$1.2 million per R2 Region per year.

### **D. ELIGIBILITY**

#### 1. Eligible Applicants

- Nonprofit CBOs with 3 or more years of experience providing programs aligned with one or more of the program priorities.
- Entity registered with the Secretary of State of Connecticut.
- Nonprofit located in and serving residents from designated R2 regions.

## 2. Funding

- Funding Period: October 01, 2026 – September 30, 2029
- Grant size: Individual eligible projects must have a proposed minimum funding request of \$35,000 for Economic Development and \$25,000 for Reentry and Youth Initiatives, and a maximum based on the funding tiers table below:

R <sup>2</sup> PRIORITY	FUNDING TIER LEVELS	ANNUAL FUNDING BY TIER LEVEL AMOUNTS	TOTAL TIER FUNDING PER REGION/YEAR	TOTAL # OF PROJECTS FUNDED BY TIER/REGION
<b>Economic Development</b>	TIER 4	\$100,000	\$200,000	2
	TIER 3	\$67,500	\$135,000	2
	TIER 2	\$35,000	\$70,000	2
	TIER 1	-	-	-
<b>Reentry Initiatives</b>	TIER 4	\$100,000	\$100,000	1
	TIER 3	\$72,500	\$145,000	2
	TIER 2	\$45,000	\$135,000	3
	TIER 1	\$25,000	\$25,000	1
<b>Youth Initiatives</b>	TIER 3	\$72,500	\$145,000	2
	TIER 2	\$50,000	\$100,000	2
	TIER 1	\$25,000	\$25,000	1

## 3. Application Limit

An eligible CBO may submit **one** application per region. Applicants must select one program priority per region. Multiple applications for the same regions are not allowed for this funding opportunity and may result in disqualification.

## 4. Eligible Projects

Projects applying for R<sup>2</sup> funding must be within the following three specific program priorities. Applications for funding outside of these program priorities will not be reviewed.

### i. Economic Development

Economic development ignites economic growth by enhancing access to vital resources and capital to drive forward economic development initiatives, including shovel-ready projects. The long-term vision is to achieve sustainable wage growth and enhance existing brick-and-mortar projects in the DIAs.

Funds also may be used to repair or make limited renovations to property owned by nonprofit organizations to make the spaces safe and accessible for program participants or to provide more usable space for programming (such as the installation of private rooms for counseling, installation of sports equipment, or other program-specific construction). Project under this program priority shall be completed by the end of the 3-year funding period.

### ii. Reentry Initiatives

Reentry Initiatives (Justice-Impacted Adults and Youth) support the transition of justice-impacted individuals back into communities, focusing on reducing recidivism and promoting social reintegration. Eligible organizations offer resources like job training, housing assistance, counseling, educational programs, and community engagement. Ultimately, this effort aims to enhance programs, strengthen services for affected areas, and empower individuals with the skills and resources needed for successful reintegration.

### iii. Youth Initiatives

Youth Initiatives funding will be directed toward programming that provides educational or social opportunities, mentorship, or other resources to support the development of children and youth and provide opportunities for a positive future. This priority aims to empower under-resourced youth with the tools they need to thrive academically and socially, enhancing their overall well-being and positively impacting their communities.

**E. TIMELINE**

NoFO Released	May 26, 2026	
NoFO Information Sessions and Q&A for applicants (LIVE via Microsoft Teams)	Wed, June 10, 2026 Mon, June 15, 2026	12pm-1pm 12pm-1pm
<b>Deadline to Submit Applications</b>	July 15, 2026	5:00 P.M.
*Council approval of awards	September 2026	TBD

**F. Application Review**

The applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- a. **Statement of Need** - Justification for the project for the target region based on municipal population surveys, client-specific surveys, and/or municipal statistics. Additionally, there are explanations why each data source supports the need for the program and justification as to why the organization is specifically equipped to address the target region's needs.  
  
**For Shovel Ready Project Funding** - The program needs to meet the following requirements: Project is already approved by municipal zoning bodies, economic growth projections from project are included, community impact is described with a benefit vs burden breakdown, and safety improvement measures for the area are included, and connection to R2 Program Priority is included.
- b. **Project Sustainability/Longevity** - Plans for the project’s funding sustainability, scalability/adaptability, and strategies for ongoing community engagement.
- c. **Goals/Programs** - Identifying R<sup>2</sup> priority area(s), statement of applicability of goal to priority area(s), explanation of alignment to priority area for each goal, and explanations are supported by quantitative or qualitative data (past results of programs, client feedback, community conversations, etc.).

d. <b>Resources to Carryout Contracts</b> -The staff capital, financial capacity, and technical assets a subrecipient proposes to utilize for successful project completion, as outlined in their proposal and subsequently used in the contract.
e. <b>Budget Preparation</b> - The total program budget and the organizational budget are included. There is also a proposed budget including narratives of costs and costs for planned subcontractors (if planned subcontractors are applicable) provided. Resumes for key personnel are provided.
f. <b>Existing Programs and Services</b> - Impact of existing programs has been tracked over the last three years through three output metrics, data is collected quarterly or more. Data based adjustments have been implemented to facilitate programmatic improvements.
g. <b>Project Feasibility (Shovel Ready Projects Only)</b> - Includes 3-year project timeline, records of prior project completion, technical feasibility, and a risk identification and mitigation plan.

**Please refer to Addenda for:**

Addendum #1 - Examples of Projects under Program Priorities

Addendum #2 - Special Conditions

Addendum #3 - Reporting Requirements

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