

NEWS RELEASE

United Way to Expand Unite Charlotte Program with Additional \$2.2 Million from Mecklenburg County

2022 grant cycle opens in August; information sessions slated for June

CHARLOTTE (June 3, 2021)—A program launched five years ago by United Way of Central Carolinas in response to the civic unrest in Charlotte will expand in 2022, deepening support for grassroots organizations working to address our community's most daunting social challenges.

An additional \$2.2 million contribution from Mecklenburg County will help grow and sustain Unite Charlotte, a program focused on advancing racial equity and improving economic mobility. The funds are part of the county's fiscal year 2022 budget earmarked for programs and initiatives aimed at reducing racial disparities.

"Mecklenburg County's investment is tremendous in helping United Way expand Unite Charlotte in order to grow a more diverse and inclusive pipeline of Black and Brown nonprofit leaders," said Sam Smith Jr., United Way's director of external engagement. "We are grateful that county leaders recognize the key role United Way plays in advancing racial equity and reducing racial disparities through investments in grassroots nonprofits."

Established in 2016, Unite Charlotte addresses the inequities within philanthropy by intentionally funding Black- and Brown-led grassroots organizations in Mecklenburg County that increase racial equity and economic mobility. The program is part of United Way's annual community investment initiative and, to date, has invested \$2.39 million in over 90 organizations.

Last year, Mecklenburg County contributed \$1 million to expand Unite Charlotte. The funding allowed United Way to fund and build the capacity of 33 grassroots organizations in 2021.

"Mecklenburg County is proud to expand its support to emerging nonprofit organizations through Unite Charlotte," said Dena R. Diorio, Mecklenburg County manager. "The Board of County Commissioners and I believe that building capacity in our nonprofit sector will pay dividends for our entire community."

In addition to operational funding, Unite Charlotte provides organizations with resources and opportunities to grow capacity, strengthen leadership and build resiliency. With the additional \$2.2 million from the county, the program will deepen capacity-building support for a small cohort of Unite Charlotte organizations through a pilot program offering back-office support in areas like technology, finances and human resources.

"The additional funding from Mecklenburg County to grow and sustain Unite Charlotte is further evidence that this unique program is a success and making important strides for our community," said Kathryn Firmin-Sellers, United Way's chief impact officer. "We are very dedicated to this initiative and eager to connect with all donors that have a desire to support racial equity and the continued growth of the Unite Charlotte initiative."

2022 Unite Charlotte Grants

United Way is opening its 2022 grant cycle for Unite Charlotte on August 2, 2021. This cycle will make one-year grant awards averaging \$25,000 to 25 organizations with budgets under \$250,000. However, grant awards may fluctuate based on funding availability and decisions made by the grant-making committee.

Funding will be prioritized for Black- and Brown-led organizations with a demonstrated commitment to serving historically marginalized groups. Unite Charlotte also invests in capacity-building trainings for nonprofits to strengthen program quality and foster organizational growth.

Agencies interested in receiving funding through Unite Charlotte are encouraged to attend one of the upcoming information sessions about the 2022 Unite Charlotte funding priorities and process. Registration is required for the sessions.

- Information Session on June 15, 2021 | 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. | [Register Here](#)
- Information Session on June 30, 2021 | 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. | [Register Here](#)

For questions and inquires, email unitechcharlotte@uwcentralcarolinas.org. Learn more about Unite Charlotte by visiting <https://uwcentralcarolinas.org/unite-charlotte/>.

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About United Way of Central Carolinas

United Way fights for the education, health and financial stability of every person in our region, improving lives by mobilizing the caring power of local communities in Charlotte/Mecklenburg, Mooresville/Lake Norman, and Anson, Cabarrus and Union counties. For more information, please visit uwcentralcarolinas.org.

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