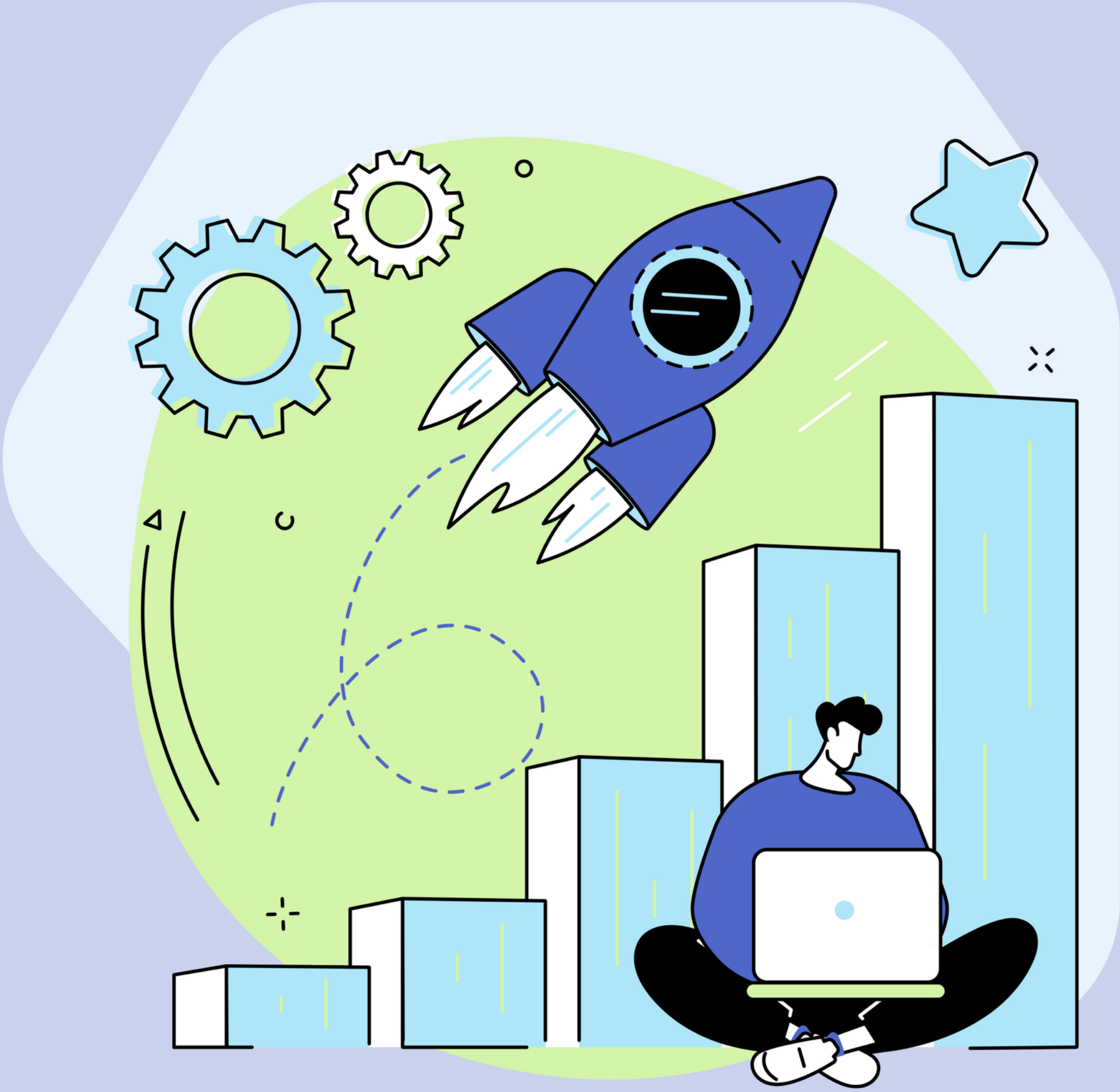
UNCOMMON EVALUATION

Value Made Visible

Initiative Information Package



IMPORTANT DETAILS BEFORE WE GET TO THE GOOD STUFF

Information and Use Notice

This information package provides an overview of Value Made Visible, an annual Social Return on Investment initiative from Uncommon Evaluation.
It is intended to help nonprofit and community-based organizations understand the purpose of the initiative, eligibility considerations, application process, project scope, participation expectations, and potential deliverables.

Not legal, financial, or accounting advice

This information package is provided for general informational purposes only. It does not constitute legal, financial, accounting, or professional fundraising advice. Organizations should consult appropriate professional advisors regarding legal, financial, privacy, or compliance questions specific to their circumstances.

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OVERVIEW

Value Made Visible is a Social Return on Investment initiative created and delivered by Uncommon Evaluation.

Each year, Uncommon Evaluation selects a small number of nonprofit and community-based organizations to receive a fully sponsored SROI project at no cost to the organization. Each selected project has an estimated value of $10,000–$25,000, depending on the final scope.

The initiative is designed for small to medium-sized organizations whose work creates meaningful social, economic, or systems-level value that is difficult to fully capture through traditional reporting. This may include prevention work, stabilization supports, family support, systems navigation, housing services, anti-trafficking programs, re-entry services, youth justice supports, school-based interventions, community safety initiatives, and other programs where the value is real but not always easy to see.

The purpose of Value Made Visible is to help selected organizations better understand, communicate, and use the broader value their work creates for participants, families, communities, funders, and systems.

WHY VALUE MADE VISIBLE EXISTS

Many nonprofit and community-based organizations are doing work that matters deeply but is difficult to explain using standard evaluation and reporting tools. Traditional reporting often focuses on activities and outputs: how many people were served, how many sessions were delivered, how many referrals were made, or how many events were held. These measures are important, but they rarely tell the full story.

They may not show what was prevented. They may not capture increased stability, improved wellbeing, reduced crisis involvement, stronger family relationships, safer communities, or avoided public costs. They may also miss the value created when people are connected to support earlier, before challenges become more severe or expensive.

As a result, organizations can find themselves trying to explain complex and meaningful work using narrow reporting tools that were not designed to capture its full value. Value Made Visible was created to help bridge that gap.

Through a focused SROI process, selected organizations receive support to identify key outcomes, examine existing evidence, estimate social and economic value, and translate findings into a clearer story that can be used for funding, communications, board education, partnership development, and broader sector learning.

WHAT IS SROI?

Social Return on Investment, or SROI, is an evaluation approach that helps organizations understand the value created by a program or service. SROI looks beyond basic outputs and asks: What value was created because this work happened?

That value may include improvements in participant wellbeing, increased housing stability, improved family functioning, reduced justice-system involvement, increased school engagement, avoided crisis service use, improved access to resources, stronger community connections, or other outcomes that matter to people and systems.

SROI uses available evidence, stakeholder insight, outcome mapping, and financial proxies to estimate the value of change created by a program. The process does not reduce human services to money. Rather, it uses monetary valuation as one tool to make social value easier to understand, compare, and communicate.

A strong SROI can help organizations explain not only what they do, but why it matters and what may be lost when effective programs are underfunded, overlooked, or reduced.

For a better understanding of what SROI is, please consult our What is SROI? guide for more information.

WHO SHOULD APPLY

The Value Made Visible initiative is for small to medium-sized nonprofit and community-based organizations working in areas such as prevention, housing stability, child and family wellbeing, anti-trafficking, youth justice, re-entry, school-based supports, mental health and wellbeing, community safety, victim services, workforce development, systems navigation, or other forms of early intervention and social support.

For the purpose of this initiative, small organizations are generally defined as those with annual operating budgets up to $1 million. Medium-sized organizations are generally defined as those with annual operating budgets between $1 million and $5 million.

Strong applicants will have a clearly defined program or service stream they want to examine. They do not need perfect data, but they should have some existing information that can support the analysis. This may include participant counts, service data, outcome data, grant reports, referral information, budget information, previous evaluation findings, participant feedback, or other relevant evidence.

Organizations should also have leadership support and a clear reason for wanting to better understand or communicate the value of their work.

GEOGRAPHIC ELIGIBILITY

Value Made Visible is open to U.S.-based nonprofit and community-based organizations.

Because Uncommon Evaluation's project team is rooted in Arizona, Colorado and Texas, organizations in these states will receive priority consideration. Organizations outside of these states are also welcome to apply when there is a strong fit with the initiative's purpose, sector focus, and learning goals.

Priority will be given to organizations whose work aligns closely with Uncommon Evaluation's focus areas and where the project has strong potential to generate useful learning for the organization, its funders, peer agencies, and the broader sector.

STRONG-FIT APPLICANTS

A strong applicant for Value Made Visible will usually have a program that is already operating, a defined group of participants or beneficiaries, and some form of existing data or documentation.

The strongest applications will typically demonstrate:

- A clear program model and important outcome story.
- Some existing evidence that can support the analysis.
- Leadership support for participating in the project.
- A practical reason for wanting to understand social value now.
- A willingness to use the findings strategically and share learning publicly in some form.
- Potential relevance to funders, peer organizations, policymakers, community partners, or broader sector conversations.

The initiative is not limited to organizations with sophisticated evaluation systems. Many strong candidates may have imperfect data. The key question is whether there is enough information, access, and organizational readiness to support a credible and useful SROI process.

THIS INITIATIVE MAY NOT BE THE RIGHT FIT IF...

Value Made Visible may not be the right fit for organizations that are still in the very early stages of program development, do not yet have a clear service model, or have no access to relevant program information.

It may also not be the right fit for organizations seeking a full organizational evaluation, a communications campaign, a new data system, a general strategic plan, or broad evaluation capacity-building support.

The initiative is focused on a bounded SROI project for a specific program or service stream. If an organization needs significant evaluation infrastructure before an SROI can be completed, Uncommon Evaluation may recommend a different starting point, such as an evaluation audit, readiness assessment, logic model, or data strategy project.

EXAMPLES OF POTENTIALLY STRONG-FIT PROGRAMS

Value Made Visible may be a strong fit for programs such as:

- A housing stabilization program that helps participants avoid shelter use, eviction, or deeper crisis involvement.
- A youth prevention program that supports school engagement, emotional wellbeing, family connection, or reduced justice-system contact.
- An anti-trafficking program that supports stabilization, safety, employment, housing, or long-term recovery.
- A family support program that helps caregivers access resources, strengthen parenting capacity, or avoid deeper systems involvement.
- A re-entry program that supports employment, housing, community connection, or reduced recidivism.
- A school-based support program that improves student wellbeing, belonging, attendance, or access to services.
- A community safety initiative that reduces harm, improves trust, or connects people to appropriate supports outside of crisis response.

These examples are illustrative only. Organizations with other types of programs are welcome to apply if they believe their work creates meaningful value that is difficult to capture through traditional reporting.

WHAT SELECTED ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVE

Organizations selected for Value Made Visible receive a focused SROI project completed by Uncommon Evaluation.

The final project scope will be confirmed with each selected organization, but the process will typically include:

- A review of existing program documents, reports, data, and relevant background materials.
- A clear description of the program model, including key activities, participants, intended outcomes, and relevant context.
- Stakeholder and outcome mapping to identify who experiences value and what kinds of change the program contributes to.
- Review and analysis of available evidence, including service data, outcome data, financial information, participant feedback, previous evaluation findings, grant reports, or other relevant sources.
- Identification of appropriate financial proxies to estimate the social and economic value associated with key outcomes.
- Calculation of SROI findings, including assumptions, limitations, and sensitivity considerations.
- A final written SROI report summarizing the methodology, findings, limitations, and strategic implications.
- A shorter public-facing case study, summary, or learning product, where appropriate, to support communications, funding conversations, and broader sector learning.

The project is intended to be focused, practical, and useful. It is not designed to be a large-scale research study or a full organizational evaluation.

ESTIMATED PROJECT VALUE

Each selected Value Made Visible project has an estimated value of $10,000–$25,000, depending on the final scope.

Selected organizations receive the project at no cost. The project is fully sponsored by Uncommon Evaluation as part of this annual initiative.

Although selected organizations do not pay a fee, participation requires time, communication, access to relevant information, and a willingness to share learning from the project in some form.

WHAT PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS COMMIT TO

Value Made Visible is a partnership. Selected organizations are expected to actively participate in the process so that the final SROI is credible, useful, and grounded in the organization's actual work.

Participating organizations must be able to identify a primary contact person who can support communication, coordinate internal input, and provide access to relevant documents and data.

Selected organizations are expected to participate in project meetings, respond to information requests, review draft materials, provide feedback within agreed timelines, and help clarify the program model, outcomes, costs, and available evidence.

Organizations must also be willing to share learning from the project in some form. This may include a named case study, anonymized case study, testimonial, public-facing summary, webinar, conference presentation, funder-facing conversation, or another mutually agreed knowledge-sharing activity.

The purpose of this expectation is to support both the selected organization and the broader sector. Many organizations are working to better explain the value of prevention, stabilization, and community-based support. Sharing lessons from selected projects helps strengthen that collective understanding.

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS MAY NEED TO PROVIDE

Selected organizations may be asked to provide information such as program descriptions, logic models, theories of change, participant counts, service data, outcome data, referral data, follow-up data, participant feedback, staff observations, case note summaries, partner feedback, financial information, program budgets, grant reports, annual reports, previous evaluation reports, or relevant research.

Not every organization will have all of these materials. The purpose of the process is to work with the best available evidence, identify reasonable assumptions, and clearly explain both the strengths and limitations of the analysis.

Organizations do not need perfect data to apply. They do need enough information, access, and internal participation to support a credible SROI process.

Selected organizations will be asked to sign a project agreement before work begins. The agreement will confirm the project scope, timeline, roles and responsibilities, confidentiality expectations, data-sharing arrangements, student involvement where applicable, and public learning or case study permissions.

STUDENT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Uncommon Evaluation occasionally partners with universities to provide students with supervised, applied learning opportunities in evaluation, Social Return on Investment, research, and data analysis.

When appropriate, selected Value Made Visible projects may include student involvement. This could include support with literature review, document review, data cleaning, coding, analysis, synthesis, or other project activities that provide students with meaningful learning experience while contributing to the overall SROI process.

Organizations applying to Value Made Visible should be open to engaging with students and/or allowing students to review and analyze relevant program data as part of a supervised project team.

Any student involvement will be discussed with the selected organization before the project begins. Student access to information will be limited to what is appropriate for the project and will be guided by confidentiality, privacy, and data protection expectations. Where needed, Uncommon Evaluation may use de-identified or aggregated data, confidentiality agreements, data-sharing protocols, or other safeguards to protect participant and organizational information.

Student involvement is intended to support both the selected organization and the development of future evaluation practitioners. It does not replace Uncommon Evaluation's responsibility for project quality, analysis, interpretation, or final deliverables.

PUBLIC SHARING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Uncommon Evaluation recognizes that some programs work with sensitive populations, confidential information, or complex community issues.

Public learning can be adapted based on the nature of the work and the organization's needs. A public-facing product does not have to disclose sensitive participant information, private organizational details, or confidential data.

Possible knowledge-sharing options include a named case study, an anonymized case study, an aggregated learning summary, a public quote or testimonial, a joint webinar, a conference proposal, a short public-facing brief, or a limited discussion of high-level findings and lessons learned.

These details will be discussed before the project begins and documented in the project agreement. Uncommon Evaluation will work with each selected organization to determine what can be shared appropriately, ethically, and safely.

FUNDING CONTEXT

The application asks organizations to describe how the organization and proposed program are currently funded.

This information helps Uncommon Evaluation understand how SROI findings may be used strategically. For example, findings may support funding renewal, donor engagement, grant reporting, board communication, government relations, partnership development, or future sustainability planning.

Applicants may be asked to identify whether the organization or program is funded through government grants or contracts, foundation funding, corporate sponsorship, individual donations, major gifts, United Way or community foundation support, fee-for-service revenue, internal operating funds, pilot funding, or other sources.

Organizations may also be asked whether current program funding is time-limited, at risk, or connected to an upcoming renewal or decision point. This information is used to assess fit and potential use of findings. It does not mean that organizations with less visible or less formal funding are automatically excluded.

WHAT IS INCLUDED

The final scope will be confirmed with each selected organization. In general, Value Made Visible includes a focused SROI project for one clearly defined program or service stream.

The project typically includes discovery and scoping, review of existing data and documents, stakeholder and outcome mapping, SROI analysis, a final written report, and a shorter public-facing learning product where appropriate.

The project may also include limited meetings with organizational staff or stakeholders to clarify outcomes, assumptions, or program context.

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED

Value Made Visible is not intended to include unlimited consultation or broad organizational support beyond the agreed SROI scope.

Unless specifically agreed upon, the project does not include a full organizational evaluation, creation of a new data system, large-scale survey administration, grant writing, strategic planning, communications campaign development, dashboard creation, ongoing evaluation coaching, implementation support, or unlimited revisions.

If additional needs are identified during the project, Uncommon Evaluation may recommend separate paid support after the Value Made Visible project is complete. This helps ensure that the initiative remains focused, feasible, and useful for both the selected organization and Uncommon Evaluation.

HOW ORGANIZATIONS ARE SELECTED

Applications are reviewed based on strategic fit, feasibility, readiness, and potential learning value.

Selection criteria include the clarity of the proposed program, alignment with the initiative's focus areas, availability of relevant data, leadership support, ability to participate, potential to produce useful findings, and willingness to share learning publicly in some form.

Applications will also be reviewed for the potential value of the project beyond the individual organization. This includes whether the SROI could help illuminate broader lessons about prevention, social value, funding strategy, avoided costs, hidden outcomes, or types of work that are often undervalued in traditional reporting.

Because only a small number of organizations are selected each year, not all strong applicants will be chosen in a given cycle.

Organizations that are not selected may still be invited to explore other forms of SROI, evaluation, or strategy support through Uncommon Evaluation.

ANTICIPATED PROJECT TIMELINE

The anticipated timeline for a Value Made Visible project is approximately 8–12 weeks from kickoff to final deliverables, depending on project scope, data readiness, organizational availability, and review timelines.

A typical project may include the following phases:

Phase 1: Discovery and scoping
Uncommon Evaluation meets with the organization to clarify the program, intended outcomes, available data, key stakeholders, project boundaries, and final scope.

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Phase 2: Document and data review
The organization provides relevant program documents, data, reports, budget information, and other materials. Uncommon Evaluation reviews the available evidence and identifies any major gaps or limitations.

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Phase 3: Outcome and value mapping
Uncommon Evaluation works with the organization to identify key stakeholders, outcomes, and areas of social or economic value.

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Phase 4: SROI analysis
Uncommon Evaluation completes the analysis using available evidence, appropriate assumptions, and relevant financial proxies.

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Phase 5: Draft findings
The organization reviews draft findings for accuracy, context, and interpretation.

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Phase 6: Final reporting
Uncommon Evaluation provides the final SROI report and, where appropriate, a shorter public-facing case study or learning summary.

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Phase 7: Knowledge sharing
The organization and Uncommon Evaluation identify appropriate next steps for sharing or using the findings, such as a testimonial, webinar, case study, conference proposal, or funder-facing discussion.

Final timelines will be confirmed before each project begins.

BENEFITS FOR SELECTED ORGANIZATIONS

Selected organizations can use Value Made Visible findings to better explain the value of their work.

The process may support stronger funding conversations, clearer communication with board members and partners, improved understanding of program outcomes, better use of existing data, and more strategic storytelling.

For organizations working in prevention, stabilization, early intervention, or systems navigation, SROI can be especially useful because much of the value may come from harms avoided, crises prevented, or costly systems involvement reduced.

The final report and case study can help organizations communicate not only what they do, but what their work makes possible.

BENEFITS FOR THE BROADER SECTOR

Value Made Visible is also designed to generate learning beyond the selected organizations. Many nonprofit and community-based programs face the same challenge: their work creates value that is difficult to capture through standard reporting. This is especially true for prevention and early intervention programs, where success may mean that something harmful, costly, or disruptive did not happen.

By sharing lessons from selected SROI projects, Value Made Visible aims to help funders, nonprofit leaders, evaluators, and community partners better understand how social value can be identified, described, and used.

The initiative is intended to contribute to a broader conversation about what counts as evidence, how value is communicated, and how organizations can make a stronger case for work that is often essential but underrecognized.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Organizations interested in Value Made Visible may apply during one of two intake rounds: **Fall 2026** or **Winter 2027**.

For the **Fall intake round**, applications must be submitted by August 31, 2026. Selected organizations will be notified by September 15, 2026, with projects expected to begin on or about October 1, 2026.

For the **Winter intake round**, applications must be submitted by November 30, 2026. Selected organizations will be notified by December 15, 2026, with projects expected to begin on or about January 15, 2027.

A limited number of organizations will be selected in each intake round. Applications will be reviewed based on strategic fit, feasibility, data availability, leadership readiness, organizational capacity, and potential for broader learning.

KEY DATES

Fall 2026 Intake	
Application opens	July 20, 2026
Application deadline	August 31, 2026
Selected organizations notified	September 15, 2026
Project kickoff period	October 1, 2026
Estimated project completion	December 15–31, 2026

Winter 2027 Intake	
Application opens	October 20, 2026
Application deadline	November 30, 2026
Selected organizations notified	December 15, 2026
Project kickoff period	January 15, 2027
Estimated project completion	March 31, 2027

BEFORE APPLYING

Before applying, organizations should consider whether they have a clearly defined program or service stream, access to relevant data or documentation, leadership support, capacity to participate in an 8–12 week project, and willingness to share learning publicly in some form.

Organizations should also consider how they would use the SROI findings. Strong applications will usually show a clear connection between the project and funding strategy, board communication, program improvement, partnership development, public learning, or broader sector influence.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is this really no cost for selected organizations?

Yes. Selected organizations receive a fully sponsored SROI project at no cost. Each project has an estimated value of $10,000–$25,000, depending on the final scope. Although there is no fee, selected organizations are expected to contribute time, information, participation, and a willingness to share learning from the project in some form.

Why is Uncommon Evaluation offering this?

Uncommon Evaluation created Value Made Visible to help organizations better understand and communicate social value, especially when traditional reporting does not fully capture the importance of their work.

The initiative also supports broader sector learning by generating practical examples of how SROI can be used with nonprofit and community-based programs.

Do we need perfect data to apply?

No. Perfect data is not required.

Many organizations have incomplete or imperfect data. The SROI process can work with existing evidence, reasonable assumptions, and clearly stated limitations. However, organizations do need enough relevant information to support a credible and useful analysis.

Can small organizations apply?

Yes. Small and mid-sized organizations are encouraged to apply if they have a clearly defined program, some relevant information, leadership support, and a strong reason for wanting to understand social value.

For the purpose of this initiative, small organizations are generally defined as those with annual operating budgets up to $1 million. Medium-sized organizations are generally defined as those with annual operating budgets between $1 million and $5 million.

Can organizations outside Arizona, Colorado, and Texas apply?

Yes. The initiative is open to U.S.-based organizations. Organizations in Arizona, Colorado, and Texas will receive priority consideration because of Uncommon Evaluation's project team presence in those states, but organizations in other states are welcome to apply and will be strongly considered.

Can the results of our SROI be anonymized?

Yes. Public learning can take different forms depending on confidentiality, safety, privacy, and organizational needs. These details will be discussed before the project begins.

What if our organization is not selected?

Organizations that are not selected may still be invited to explore other options with Uncommon Evaluation, including paid SROI projects, evaluation audits, readiness assessments, logic model development, or other evaluation support.

Because only a small number of organizations are selected each year, not being selected does not necessarily mean the organization or program is not a strong candidate for SROI.

Can we pay for an SROI if we are not selected?

Yes. Organizations interested in pursuing a paid SROI project can contact Uncommon Evaluation to discuss scope, timing, and pricing.

Can funders nominate organizations?

Yes. Funders, partners, coalition leaders, and community members may nominate organizations for consideration. Nominated organizations will be invited to review the opportunity and complete the application if they are interested.

READY TO APPLY?

To apply, complete the online application form here or visit the Uncommon Evaluation website: https://www.uncommonevaluation.com/value-made-visible

CONTACT

For questions about Value Made Visible, please contact:

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ABOUT UNCOMMON EVALUATION

Uncommon Evaluation helps nonprofit and community-based organizations make evaluation more useful, strategic, and understandable.

We specialize in practical evaluation support, Social Return on Investment, outcome measurement, evaluation capacity-building, and plain-language tools that help organizations move beyond compliance reporting and use evidence more strategically.

Value Made Visible reflects our belief that important work should not remain invisible simply because it is difficult to measure.