

Education Strategy

Request for Proposal

United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region (UWDOR) issues this Request for Proposal as a part of our commitment to achieve the goal of improving the condition of our neighbors facing poverty and limited resources. UWDOR targets our education investment on strategies that aim to improve the academic achievement of our community’s youth. Our goal is to maximize educational outcomes for children – zero to eight years of age – living in Dutchess and Orange counties so that they can forge a path toward lifelong learning and success.

The goals outlined in this RFP represent a multi-faceted plan developed in partnership with community leaders including government, businesses, nonprofits, medical practitioners, educators, students, parents and the larger community. Through this RFP process, UWDOR seeks partnerships with nonprofit organizations during the time period **of July 2018 to June 2019**. Our intention is to invest sufficient funding to achieve significant results. United Way’s Community Fund is divided into two funding categories:

- **For previously funded programs**, please indicate the amount you are requesting (maximum request of \$50,000).
- **For programs not previously funded**, United Way has allotted funding in increments up to \$10,000 for these requests. Please indicate your request here (maximum of \$10,000). *If your program is selected for funding, you may be eligible for additional funding next year. This is contingent that your organization remains in good standing with regards to all United Way contract requirements. Future additional funding is not guaranteed.*

Key Dates

Activity	Date
RFP Released	January 29, 2018
Questions & Answers	Please submit questions to: ci-inbox@uwdor.org Responses will be issued within 48 business hours
Technical Guidance “How to Apply”	10:00 am on February 14, 2018
Application Due Date	5:00 pm on March 9, 2018
Award Notifications by	June 30, 2018

Core Funding Criteria

In partnership with our community, United Way utilizes a cohesive strategy to address the needs of children, families and individuals with limited income in Dutchess and Orange Counties. This RFP is designed to establish a foundation for educational success of local students and, in some cases, may involve pilot initiatives that have the potential to be expanded upon with future funding. UWDOR is seeking to support partners who share our commitment to the following:

- A commitment to **community-level outcomes** focused on demographics and geographic locations with the greatest need;
- A commitment to cross-agency and cross-community **collaboration** in developing effective strategies; and
- A commitment to strategies that demonstrate success using **evidence-based or evidence-informed models**.

Community-Level Outcomes

United Way has conducted extensive research and has held community forums to continually address the goals and indicators that determine community success. Together, we identified and are working towards key indicators of success. We hold ourselves and our partners accountable to achieving success by using concrete metrics based on local, state and federal data to measure our progress:

Annual Goals	Community-Level Outcomes
Empowering parents and caregivers to be their child’s first teacher.	Increase the percentage of ready-to-learn children arriving at Kindergarten.
Provide opportunities for structured learning outside of the classroom for students in Kindergarten through 3 rd grade.	Increase the percentage of students reading proficiently in 3 rd grade.

Collaboration

Strong collaboration among all partners is necessary for our community to realize outcomes that will demonstrate lasting and meaningful change for our region’s children. Nonprofit partners are strongly encouraged to incorporate collaborative opportunities into their proposal.

* Programs that rely on ANY PARTNER to accomplish stated goals (school districts, nonprofit organizations, etc.) are required to provide letters of commitment that demonstrate support from the outside organization.

Evidence-Based or Evidence-Informed Models

United Way is committed to changing our community in a positive and meaningful way. In order to do so, we seek to partner with programs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed, meaning they have been proven successful in the past.

From the Child Welfare Information Gateway:

Evidence-based practices are approaches to prevention or treatment that are validated by some form of documented scientific evidence. This includes findings established through controlled clinical studies, but other methods of establishing evidence are also valid.

Evidence-based programs use a defined curriculum or set of services that, when implemented with fidelity as a whole, has been validated by some form of scientific evidence.

Evidence-informed practices use the best available research and practice knowledge to guide program design and implementation. This informed practice allows for innovation while incorporating the lessons learned from the existing research literature.¹ For your convenience, the evaluation tool has been outlined below:

Application Evaluation Scoring Rubric

Applications will be evaluated based upon the following criterion:

- Program Design (50 Points)
 - Application should demonstrate the ability to achieve identified community-level outcomes;
 - Application should demonstrate evidence of active collaboration;
 - Application should demonstrate identification and implementation of evidence based/informed models.
- Justification of Need (20 Points) – Application should demonstrate - through data - the need for this program and value added to our community.
- Organizational Infrastructure (30 Points) – Application must demonstrate that the organization has the capacity to implement program design and collaboration.

** Organizations that are collaborating will not be considered for funding without letters of support. Collaboration is highly encouraged.*

¹ <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/practice-improvement/evidence/ebp/definitions/>

Our Community's Challenge

“Children are born ready to learn. They cultivate 85% of their intellect, personality and skills by age 5. The first months and years of life set the stage for life-long development.”² While it has been widely accepted that this critical timeframe is most essential indicator of a child’s further lifelong educational attainment, many students still arrive at the first day of kindergarten unprepared. In fact, as many as 40% of American children begin school well behind in their expected development stage.³

FACT: Across our nation, 66% of children are read to daily, but that percentage plummets to 34% for families whose incomes are below 100% of the federal poverty level.⁴

This is a leading factor of the word gap. “By the age of 3, children born into low-income families heard roughly 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers” – *The Early Catastrophe, The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3*.⁵ This landmark study demonstrates that development of cognitive function in children begins far earlier than the first day of kindergarten. In fact, 98% of the words spoken by children are derived from their parent’s or caregiver’s vocabulary.⁵

Educational enrichment offered through pre-kindergarten programs increases social-emotional learning and cognitive development. Students participating in pre-kindergarten had alphabet recognition skills 85% higher than their peers who entered kindergarten with no prior program.⁶ As of 2014, the state percentage of four-year-olds enrolled in free pre-kindergarten programs in our area was 23.5%, far below the NYS average of 36%.⁷

New York State administers an annual English Language Arts exam to evaluate children’s vocabulary, writing and listening skills. Just one in three students in the community is reading proficiently. Children who are not reading proficiently by third grade are four times likelier to leave high school without a diploma. These trends highlight an increased risk for poverty, underemployment and chronic disease.⁸

² Wisconsin Council on Children and Families 2007

³ Westchester Children’s Association. “Vote for Kids.” <http://www.wca4kids.org/issues/vote-kids/>. 2017. Accessed 1/3/18.

⁴ Data Research Center for Child and Adolescent Health 2011/12 National Survey of Children’s Health. Available at: <http://childhealthdata.org/browse/survey/results?q=2285&r=34&g=458>. Accessed 1/12/16

⁵ Hart, Betty & Risley, Rodd. “The Early Catastrophe; The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3.” American Educator, 2003

⁶ Early Childhood Research Quarterly. “Does attending a state-funded preschool program improve letter name knowledge?”

⁷ MidHudson Community Profiles. <http://www.mhvcommunityprofiles.org/region/education/school-readiness/prekindergarten-participation/data-tables>. Accessed 1/27/16

⁸ Annie Casey Foundation, “Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation” 2011

Our Community's Opportunity

Parent and Caregiver Support

Parents and caregivers not only provide a safe and secure home and lay the groundwork for language development but they also identify the child's first barriers to learning, such as health and cognitive delays. Without guidance, factual information, resources and support, parents and caregivers may be unaware of how to guide their children and keep them on track developmentally. United Way seeks to increase support systems that include the participation of parents and caregivers in improving language, motor and cognitive development. Our belief is that by providing support, we can foster an educational environment for children to thrive in.

United Way seeks to increase support systems and foster inclusion for parents and caregivers so that children develop secure attachments and receive support in language, motor, and cognitive development.

Goal: Empower parents and caregivers to be their child's first teacher.

Indicator: Parents and caregivers will support the appropriate social and emotional development of their children.

A Community Effort to Learning

High-quality early educational support yields positive long-term outcomes not only relating to educational attainment but also health, employment, and socio-economic status. Therefore, it is essential that children are exposed to a breadth of educational experiences from birth onward.

Children who start school lacking social, developmental, cognitive and language skills begin formal education behind their peer group and are less likely to catch up before the third grade. Third grade is a pivotal benchmark, in that students shift from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." If the fundamental reading and comprehension skills are lacking at that point, subsequent academic performance is jeopardized. Reading interventions implemented after the third grade are seldom as effective as those in the early years.⁹

Children need high-quality early education programs to develop the appropriate skills. Early grade-level support prepares children for academic success. Students who received early childhood educational interventions not only improved educational outcomes early on but were also likelier to attain a diploma.¹⁰

⁹ Annie Casey Foundation, "Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation" 2011

The fact that children spend less than 20% of their waking hours in school allows them to participate in structured learning outside of the traditional classroom.

Expanded learning opportunities and positive youth development, such as those found in afterschool, summer learning and extended day programs, are proven to improve academic achievement. Research completed by the Afterschool Alliance in 2008 suggests that regular participation in high-quality afterschool programs is linked to improvement in test scores, study habits and school attendance. Similarly, summer learning programs can prevent loss of knowledge that can occur when school is not in session, known as the “summer slide.”

Goal: Provide opportunities for structured learning outside of the classroom.

Indicator: Students will demonstrate grade-appropriate academic achievement through standardized tests or other formalized school reports.

Selection Process

All applications will be reviewed by members of the United Way Community Impact Committee and supporting Councils. Additionally, community leaders have been invited to work as evaluators to ensure a diverse representation of our community serving to further this crucial process. Applications will be scored based on the set criteria (see page 3). The Community Impact Committee reserves the right to take previous granting history into consideration and to request additional information during this process.