

Veterans Services

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 affected by poverty and limited resources. This is in partnership with the MISSION UNITED platform. UWDOR targets strategies that support the financial stability of our veterans and their families. We aim to improve outcomes for our veterans living in Dutchess and Orange counties by assisting them along their path to financial stability.

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. *All programs may apply for up to \$10,000 under this newer category of funding.*

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 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 veterans’ overall stability. UWDOR is seeking to support partners who share our commitment to the following:

- A commitment to community level **outcomes** focused on geographic and demographic locations with the greatest need as defined by data;

- A commitment to cross-agency and cross-community **collaboration** in developing effective, cohesive strategies; and
- A commitment to strategies that demonstrate long term success using **evidence-based or evidence-informed models**.

Service Areas

Together with our partners, we will support veterans services to ensure access to vital housing, legal assistance and employment training programs. Community-level indicators to make sure we have met that need may include but are not limited to: the number of veterans receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Point in Time rates of homeless veterans per county, unemployment insurance rates and/or total rate of employment of veterans.

Service Areas	Description
Housing Assistance	Case coordinators/other staff/volunteers help veterans and their families access affordable and safe housing that meets their needs.
Legal Assistance	Case coordinators/other staff/volunteers help veterans and their families access legal services.
Access to employment-related education and training	Case coordinators/other staff/volunteers help veterans access job-relevant education and training opportunities that reflect their career interests.

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 veterans. 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 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, these models have been defined 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.*

Our Community's Challenge

Dutchess and Orange counties are home to nearly 40,000 veterans, many of whom lack access to vital services. According to United Way Worldwide, veterans are much more likely to experience homelessness. They make up 8.6% of the overall homeless population; this is

¹ Evidence-Based Practice Definitions and Glossaries. (n.d.). Retrieved January 09, 2018, from <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/practice-improvement/evidence/ebp/definitions/>

disproportional to their overall national population. They also encounter poverty rates at an average of 5% in Dutchess and Orange counties, with rates as high as 17% in the city centers. Individuals living below the poverty line have an increased chance of facing serious health and mental health issues, including depression.³ Unfortunately, Veterans are not exempt from this trend; in 2014, about 20 veterans committed suicide per day.

These statistics are alarming. However, UWDOR is committed to reversing these trends in Dutchess and Orange counties. With increased access to legal services, housing access and employment training, we will increase the overall stability for veterans, whether they have recently returned from a tour or have made the Hudson Valley their home for life. With additional access to the services that fall under the aforementioned categories, veterans will have the opportunity to bring litigation in order to increase their access to benefits and basic services. With further access to housing options, homelessness among veterans will decline. Finally, employment training enables veterans to improve their professional skills, allowing them to achieve greater success while seeking employment.

We recognize that several programs devoted to veterans needs exist right here in our community. Our goal is to create a continuum of services for veterans' reintegration into civilian life and beyond. Therefore, we invite nonprofits in our community to submit proposals that meet the following needs for veterans. Each proposal should address one specific category:

- Legal Assistance;
- Housing Assistance; or
- Access to employment-related education and training.

UWDOR will provide funding to programs in order to best serve the veterans population and partner with the 2-1-1 helpline, which will connect veterans in need directly to the services available. UWDOR also provides volunteers, gift-in-kind support and professional development to nonprofit organizations to increase overall organizational capacity.

Our Community's Opportunity

With coordinated service delivery, veterans will have access to basic services that put them on the path to greater stability and, ultimately, sustainability. They may call the 2-1-1 number directly to be referred to any program that serves the veterans population in their locale, or multiple service options. By obtaining housing and seeking legal assistance to receive basic services that they may have been previously denied, veterans will be able to overcome these two huge obstacles. Once the veterans secure housing and have rectified any outstanding legal issues, they may focus on increasing their economic opportunity by taking part in employment-based educational programming that focalizes on professional development and career success. Working in tandem, these three priority areas allow the veterans in our community to excel and provide for a successful and sustainable future.

Housing Assistance

Homelessness is on the rise in our region, with a nearly 6% increase since 2005, and veterans are not immune. Dutchess and Orange County residents spend 35% and 38% of their income on housing expenses. In some areas, they spend over 50%.² Obviously, local residents face obstacles with this clear lack of affordable housing. Indeed, access to housing benefits overall well-being. Those without access to permanent housing faced mental illness at nearly double the rate of those in the general population and were in poorer physical health.³ Therefore, organizations that can provide affordable housing options to veterans may apply under this category.

Legal Assistance

Due to the risk that veterans take on when taking part in active duty, many come home with physical disabilities. In fact, according to the Benchmark Institute, their chances of facing a disability are nearly twice the rate of the general population, and as a result, disability claims are increasing nationally. Veterans living with disabilities face an increased risk of experiencing poverty, as accessing employment becomes more challenging. In certain instances, veterans rely exclusively on Social Security Disability or Supplemental Security Income, meaning their overall income averages \$9,000/year, which is only 75% of the federal poverty line.

In the instance a veteran is denied basic benefits that relates to their health, housing or other noncriminal legal issues they may need access to free/low-cost legal representation. In addition, only 50% of veterans were aware that they were provided benefits after military service, according to the second edition of the Guide to Veterans Legal Issues.⁴

Therefore, it is crucial that veterans have access to competent legal advice and professionals who can educate them on resources that may be available to them and bring litigation on their behalf if necessary. Nonprofits who fit these parameters may apply. Offering legal assistance enables veterans additional access to basic services, which they may have had difficulty in procuring.

Employment Related Education and Training

Fortunately, the unemployment rate is lower in Dutchess and Orange counties (4.6% and 4.7%, respectively) compared to the state average (5.3%) during 2017, but these numbers do not dismiss the fact that the unemployment rate is higher than the national average of 4.1% (as of

² Housing. (n.d.). Retrieved January 09, 2018, from <http://www.mhvcommunityprofiles.org/dutchess-county/housing>

³ Health and Homelessness. (n.d.). Retrieved January 09, 2018, from <http://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/homelessness-health.aspx>

⁴ French, R. R., & Bayes, N. (2014). Guide to Veterans Legal Issues, Second Edition [PDF]. Benchmark Institute.

October 2017).⁵ Without viable educational opportunities and training, it is difficult to obtain a higher paying job. In Dutchess County, 15% of residents did not have a high school diploma; as for Orange County, 14% did not acquire a high school diploma.

However, in some areas, this number increased to over 30%. There is a strong correlation between educational attainment and poverty. With further access to educational training programs, veterans have a greater chance of developing a more stable career. Organizations with specialized training programs that support skills-based professional development are encouraged to apply. With education and training options, veterans will qualify for further employment opportunities leading to their overall success.

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.

⁵ County Health Rankings. (n.d.). Retrieved January 09, 2018, from <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/new-york/2017/overview>