

United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region

Education Strategy

FY2016-2017 Request for Proposal

As a pillar in the community for decades, United Way has partnered with nonprofits to support strategies to address critical needs across our region. We have laid the framework for a collaborative model focused on community solutions. We have brought positive change to the lives of many men, women and children. Together, we have made progress. As a community, it is our time to combine efforts and develop a unified vision for systematic change.

The goals outlined in this RFP represent a multi-faceted plan developed in partnership with community leaders representing government, business, non-profit, medical practitioners, educators, students, parents and our larger community.

United Way and our partners identified goals and aligned outcomes to direct our work. Together, we identified and are working toward 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.

Investing in our Community

UWDOR issues this RFP as a part of an indelible commitment to achieve the goal of improving the condition of our neighbors affected by poverty and limited resources. We aim to reducing reliance on social and government support in Dutchess and Orange counties. UWDOR targets our investment on strategies that support educational attainment of our community's youth.

Through this RFP process, UWDOR seeks partnerships with nonprofit organizations during the time period **of July 2016 to June 2017**. Our intention is to invest sufficient funding to achieve significant results.

Key Dates

Activity	Date
RFP Released	February 1, 2016
Questions & Answers	Please submit questions to: ci-inbox@uwdor.org Responses will be issued within 48 business hours
Technical Guidance "How to Apply"	12:00 pm on February 12, 2016. Join us from the comfort of your own office as we walk through "How to Apply". <i>Details to follow</i>
Application Due Date	5:00 pm on March 11, 2016
Award Notifications	May 2016

Core Funding Criteria

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

1. A commitment to community level **outcomes** focused on geographic and demographic locations with the greatest need as defined by data;
2. A commitment to cross-agency and cross-community **collaboration** in developing effective, cohesive strategies; and
3. A commitment to strategies that demonstrate long term success using **evidence-based or evidence informed models**.

- **Community Level Outcomes**

Together with our partners we will support children and families in demonstrating measureable behavior changes in educational preparation and achievement, while working collaboratively to measure our success against local indicators of educational attainment. We recognize that Children spend less than 20% of their waking hours in school. For many children, that means that 80% of their waking hours may not be spent in a structured learning environment. It is our community's responsibility to assist these families in this critical need.

Annual Goals	Community-Level Outcomes
Empowering parents and caregivers to be their child's first teacher.	Ensuring children arrive at Kindergarten ready to learn.
Supporting students achieve grade-level advancement.	Increase percentage of students reading proficiently in 3 rd grade.

- **Collaboration**

UWDOR believes that strong collaboration among all partners is necessary for our community to realize community-level outcomes that will generate lasting and meaningful change for our region's youth. Nonprofit partners are strongly encouraged to demonstrate their commitment to our community by incorporating collaborative opportunities into their requested program model.

Programs that rely on outside organizations to accomplish stated goals (i.e. school districts) are strongly encouraged to provide letters of commitment from the outside organization. Letters should be uploaded under the Required Documents form in the e-granting portal.

In the instance requests are submitted by collaborative organizations, one application should be submitted clearly outlining each respective partner and the structure in which they will operate to achieve collective goals. A separate section of the online application has been

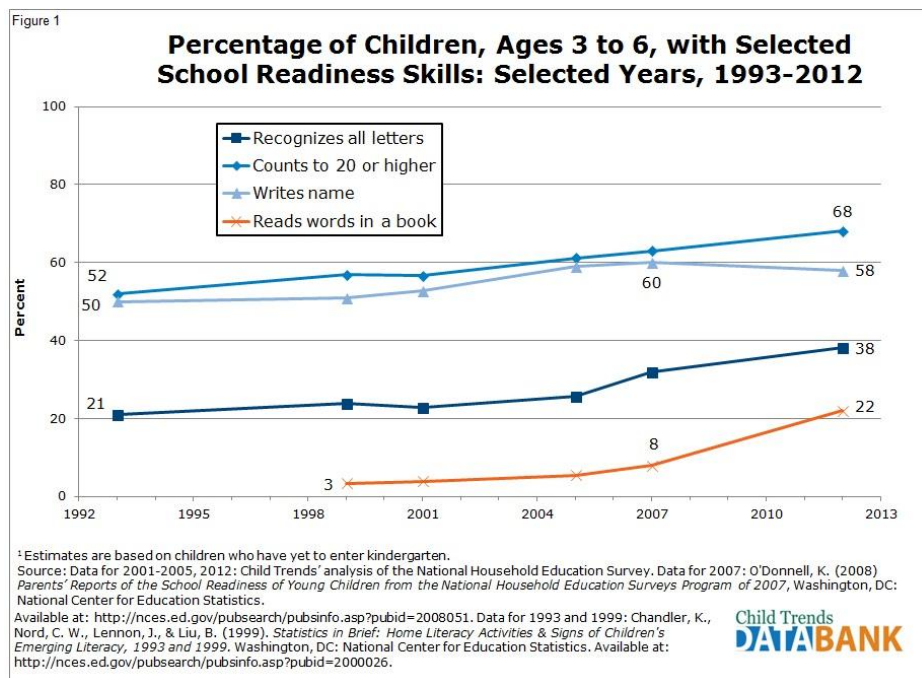
included for detailed information outlining how the collaboration will operate, including fiscal and management structure.

- **Evidence Based or Evidence-Informed Models**

Evidence-Based models are program models that have been scientifically proven to be effective at achieving the desired outcome. While this verification remains paramount to the work we do to support our community, we also recognize that evidence-informed models are less costly and also effective. Evidence Informed models are programs based upon measurement of relevant data combined with research (including case studies) that supports the efficacy of the program in delivering a measureable change in behavior, allowing for creative interventions to these complex problems.

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"¹ While it has been widely accepted that this critical timeframe is most essential indicator of a child's further lifelong educational attainment, many parents and students still arrive at the first day of kindergarten unprepared.



Why is this? The fact is: children don't come with instruction manuals. It takes the effort of a whole community to engage, encourage, and empower parents to become their child's first teacher and loudest advocate. Across our nation, two-thirds of children are read to daily... if

¹ Wisconsin Council on Children and Families 2007

their family income exceeds 400% of the federal poverty threshold; that percentage is cut nearly in half (34%) for families whose incomes are below 100% of the poverty threshold.²

Each year, New York State administers an English Language Arts exam to assess children's vocabulary, writing and listening skills. The percentage of area fourth graders who tested proficient by obtaining a score of a level 3 or higher reveal a significant need for intervention with average scores indicating that just one in three students in our community are reading proficient. Across our region, this rate has climbed slightly since 2013; increasing from 29% to 34%, which aligns to the NYS average (excluding NYS). However, some districts in our region have performance rates far below this average: Poughkeepsie (10%), Middletown (18%), and Port Jervis (19%).

Those children who are not reading proficiently by 3rd grade are 4 times more likely to leave High School without a diploma. This puts them at significant risk for poverty, underemployment, and chronic disease.³

Our Community's Opportunity

"Increasing the number of children who are ready for school and succeeding at third grade is not the sole responsibility of any single agency or professional group; rather it is a shared community concern."

Lisbeth Schorr and Vicky Marchand
"The Harvard PATHWAY to Children Reading for School
and Succeeding at Third Grade, 2007

Parent and Caregiver Support

Parents and caregivers provide access to language development, a safe and secure home, and are the first to identify barriers to learning, such as health and developmental challenges. Without guidance, information, resources and support, parents may not always know what to look for, who to ask, or how to help their children. We believe that supporting parents and families means establishing a strong foundation for children to thrive.

United Way seeks to increase support systems and foster inclusion for parents and caregivers to help children develop secure attachments, resilience, and problem solving skills that will ultimately support their emotional, academic and social success.

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

Indicator: Programs will demonstrate that caregivers served through program resources will apply appropriate responses to their child's needs.

² 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&q=458> Accessed 1/12/16

³ Annie Casey Foundation, "Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation" 2011

A Community Effort to Learning

While parents are a child's first teacher, through their early years, children are exposed to many different experiences that shape their overall development and prepare them for the formal learning environment found in pre-k and kindergarten. United Way believes that children need quality early education programs to arm them with the appropriate skills for successful grade-level advancement. Strong early grade-level support will prepare children, especially at-risk children, for academic success.

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 critical time of 3rd grade. Following 3rd grade, children read to learn. If the fundamental reading skills are lacking at that point, subsequent academic performance is jeopardized. According to research completed by the Anne E. Casey Foundation, children who do not read proficiently by 3rd grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma. The Casey Foundation notes that reading interventions implemented after 3rd grade are seldom as effective as those in the early years.⁴

Expanded learning opportunities, 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, work and study habits, and school attendance. Similarly, summer learning programs can prevent loss of knowledge that can occur when school is not in session.

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 stakeholders have been invited to serve as evaluators to ensure a diverse representation of our community is taken into consideration. Applications will be scored based on the set criteria. The Community Impact Committee reserves the right to take previous granting history into consideration and to request additional information during this process.

Successful applications will include:

- ❖ Demonstration of need for the program based on local statistics;
- ❖ High quality programming that align to outcomes outlined in this RFP;
- ❖ Organizational capacity to fulfill the program requirements;
- ❖ Financial sustainability including diversified income sources.

⁴ Annie Casey Foundation, "Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation" 2011