

United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region

Income 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 have 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. **PLEASE NOTE: CRISIS INTERVENTION FUNDING IS NOW INTEGRATED INTO OUR INCOME STRATEGY. ORGANIZATIONS MUST COMPLETE A PROGRAM BUDGET, WHICH MAY INCLUDE UP TO 10% FOR PROGRAM FEES, INCLUDING STAFF SALARY.**

Investing in our Community

UWDOR issues this RFP as a part of a long-term commitment to achieve the goal of improving the condition of our neighbors affected by poverty and limited resources. We aim to reduce reliance on social and government support in Dutchess and Orange counties. UWDOR targets our investment through strategies that support development and improved financial stability, and ultimately, independence.

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 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 financial stability and in some cases may support 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 individuals and families in demonstrating measureable behavior changes that improve their financial standing, while working collaboratively to measure our success against local indicators of poverty. These community-level indicators include, but are not limited to: the number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, unemployment insurance rates, and/or total rate of employment.

Annual Goals	Community-Level Outcomes
Improve access to resources to overcome short-term crisis.	Ensuring access to financial and educational resources.
Providing financial education to lower income families.	Decreasing the percentage of families suffering the debilitating effects of poverty.

- **Collaboration**

UWDOR believes that strong collaboration among all partners is necessary for our community to realize outcomes that will create meaningful impact. Nonprofit partners are strongly encouraged to demonstrate their commitment to community change through collaborative models.

Programs that are partnering with 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.

I. 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

The US Census estimates that approximately 11% of individuals in our region are living below the poverty level, struggling to make ends meet each day, a rate slightly below that of New York State (15%). In some cities, this number nearly triples; Newburgh (30%), Poughkeepsie (25%), Middletown (18%).¹ Similarly, the number of children receiving free or reduced lunch has increased steadily since 2005; today, one in three children across our region qualifies for free or reduced lunch. Again, in some districts, this number nearly triples; City of Poughkeepsie (96%), Middletown (74%), and Newburgh (68%).

Low-to-moderate income individuals and families face multiple economic and societal barriers that prevent them from achieving financial stability and economic independence. Living paycheck to paycheck, these families are more vulnerable to crisis, and have a limited ability to save for an emergency situation (making the idea of saving to advance their education, purchase a home, or even secure reliable transportation seem impossible). Many families are forced to choose between the basic necessities; childcare or rent, groceries or utilities.

The challenges faced impact not only individual potential, but place constraints on entire families and feed a growing financial dependency on local government and human service organizations. These financial hurdles, over time, prove not only detrimental to one's financial state, but studies have shown that those in poverty are more likely to struggle with physical and mental health problems. According to the World Health Organization, "The poor are more vulnerable to chronic diseases because of material deprivation and psychosocial stress, higher levels of risk behavior, unhealthy living conditions and limited access to good-quality health care."

Compared to moderate income individuals, individuals living in poverty show dramatic increases in mental and physical ailments; 95.5% more are diagnosed with depression, 55% more are diagnosed with asthma, and 22% more struggle with obesity.² Low income combined with chronic disease generates a burden on our society no one single agency can begin to

¹ U. S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. 2009-2013 Persons Below Poverty Level.

² "Chronic Health Problems Among US Adults, by Poverty Status – 2011". Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index. Jan. 2 – Dec., 2011.

address. In order to attack this cycle at its root, we must work together to identify the most effective strategies in the remediation and prevention of poverty in our community.

While a single hand out isn't the solution, we know that the removal of crisis is the first step in obtaining financial independence. Across Dutchess and Orange Counties, the living wage salary for a single parent with one child is \$54,558.40; if there are two children, this figure jumps to \$70,636.80³. Without the ability to cover the expenses of groceries, rent, utilities, and childcare, saving for college or advancing one's degree may seem impossible – but as we know, the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. In this case, computer skills, basic money matters, budgeting classes, and understanding the cycle of poverty can shape a pathway out of poverty.

Our Community's Opportunity

As there is no single contributor to poverty; there is no single solution. In partnership with our community, United Way has identified three broad categories to address obstacles to financial independence and mobility: a coordinated system of supports and services, increased awareness and access to available resources, and quality education and training.

Through a multi-tiered approach, it is our goal to create a strong network that will guide individuals and families from reoccurring financial crises to secure financial independence.

Step I: Alleviating Crisis

To address the immediate needs of individuals and families, UWDOR issues this RFP as part of our commitment to ensure that the men, women and children in Dutchess and Orange counties have access to resources to stabilize their daily lives and overcome short-term crises. We recognize that before we can address the significant challenges our most vulnerable neighbors face, we must first ensure that families can fulfill their basic needs including securing food, clothing, and housing. Special consideration will be given to organizations targeting vulnerable populations (i.e. Seniors, Homeless, Veterans, etc.)

Step II: Building Independence

To support individuals and families in achieving financial independence, UWDOR seeks to partner with nonprofit organizations to provide individualized case management to low-income working families to stabilize their living conditions, and allows them to earn a steady income that covers their basic necessities. Skills taught may include basic literacy, basic computer navigation, and money management. Although education alone does not guarantee success, the more individuals and families know about managing fiscal resources, the more likely they are to save, gain assets, and improve their financial health and well-being. Furthermore, obtaining a job that pays a living wage is a key component to financial stability. Without a job, families cannot put food on the table, let alone plan for the future or achieve financial security.

Goal: Improve the financial position of individuals and families across our region.

³ MIT Living Wage Calculator, <http://livingwage.mit.edu/> Accessed 1/13/16

Indicator: Demonstrated improved financial practices (i.e. establishing & maintaining a savings account, reducing negative debt, etc).

Step III: Increasing Assets

Considered one of the largest anti-poverty programs in the United States, the Earned Income Tax Credit Program (EITC) can provide individuals eligible for the credit up to \$6,242 of additional earnings for taxpayers. This is money that families can use to pay down debt, save for unplanned needs, pay for education or put food on the table for their family. Often, taxpayers are unaware of EITC or are limited by the costs associated with paying a professional to prepare their taxes.

Through the Creating Assets, Savings and Hope Program (CA\$H), United Way seeks to connect low to moderate income individuals and families with opportunities to increase annual income through tax programs such as EITC and applicable Child Tax Credits, while also providing referrals to existing financial literacy opportunities, education programs, home energy savings programs and supportive community services. These families save an average of \$150 in tax preparation fees, while gaining access to important services and resources.

Goal: Increase annual earnings of individuals and families and seniors in our region.

To accomplish the goals outlined in this priority, UWDOR anticipates continued investment in the Hudson Valley CA\$H Coalition.

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. Proposals will be scored based on the set criteria. These scores will then be collapsed, and will then be discussed at our Grant Review Panel, during which time potential proposals will be thoroughly discussed, and recommendations made to The Community Impact Board Sub-Committee (CIC). The CIC 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.