

United Way of Greater Rochester
Community Investment Division

Crisis Services Letter of Intent Handbook
Implementing the Blueprint for Change: Crisis Services

The Letter of Intent (LOI) process is the first step in implementing the investment strategies articulated in the Blueprint for Change: Crisis Services.

This guide is intended to provide information regarding the Letter of Intent process, including:

- How to Apply
- Review Criteria
- Letter of Intent Timeline
- Instructions

The information contained within this guide relates to United Way's work in the Crisis Services area only.

United Way of Greater Rochester
75 College Avenue
Rochester, NY 14607

January 22, 2010

Letter of Intent Frequently Asked Questions

All organizations seeking United Way funding in the area of crisis services for the investment year beginning August 1, 2010 must submit a Letter of Intent by March 3, 2010.

How does my organization apply for United Way funding? There is an open application process for providers interested in receiving funding from United Way to help implement strategies outlined in United Way's Blueprints for Change: Crisis Services. This Blueprint for Change was published on January 22nd; Letters of Intent from providers interested in implementing blueprint strategies will be accepted until 12:00 pm on March 3, 2010.

What is a Letter of Intent? The Letter of Intent is the initial or "first step" application for the August 1, 2010 investment year. The Letter of Intent consists of a one-page cover page, a narrative (5 page maximum), a budget using the prescribed format, the program's organization chart showing all staff positions involved with the program, the agency board of directors list, the agency IRS determination letter (501(c)(3)), the most recently submitted agency IRS form 990, and for programs implementing evidence-based programs or practices, a description of the program or practice.

What is the purpose of the Letter of Intent? This represents the first phase of our application process; it provides an opportunity for interested agencies to submit a summary of their potential application. This two-phase process was developed based on feedback from providers, indicating a preference to have an opportunity to share their intentions before committing significant time to complete a full application. Letters of Intent will also provide United Way with summaries of programs that are consistent with the strategies published in the Blueprint for Change: Crisis Services. The most promising programs that most closely align with the strategies, outcomes and indicators published in the Blueprint will be invited to submit detailed applications for funding consideration.

How does my organization get more information about the Letter of Intent Process? It is expected that agencies will be able to complete the Letter of Intent without technical assistance from United Way. Clarification questions are welcome and are accepted via email to LOIcrisis@uwrochester.org. The deadline for submitting questions is Wednesday, February 17, 2010. Questions will be collected weekly and responses posted to United Way's website at www.uwrochester.org in the "For Service Providers" section February 5, 12, and 19. This approach ensures that all providers have access to "dialogue" and have access to the same information. Given our respect for the review process, no questions about the likelihood of United Way funding a specific program will be answered.

What happens after my organization submits a Letter of Intent? All Letters of Intent will be carefully considered using the Blueprint for Change and the Letter of Intent review criteria. Clarification questions may be asked of applicants. United Way staff, with advice from the Crisis Services Advisory Volunteer Team, will select the most promising program concepts to be developed into full Proposals for funding consideration. All organizations submitting Letters of Intent will receive written notification as to whether or not their concept was selected for further consideration and submission of a detailed Proposal.

Are there limits to the number of Letters of Intent that can be submitted or the amount of funding that can be requested? There is no limit to the number of Letters of Intent that may be submitted by an agency. There is no defined limit to the amount of funding that can be requested.

How does my organization submit a Letter of Intent? An agency interested in offering a program that aligns with an investment strategy, outcome and indicators defined in the Blueprint for Change: Crisis

Services may describe that program following the Letter of Intent format contained in this handbook. Submit the completed application via email to LOIcrisis@uwrochester.org before 12:00 pm on March 3, 2010.

Letter of Intent Overview

The Investment Cycle. United Way typically follows a three year investment cycle. The investment level for the first year is set through the open application process. Second and third year investments are contingent upon: (1) the success of the United Way/Red Cross Campaign, (2) the provider meeting the terms of the provider agreement, and (3) the program's achievement of pre-defined, measurable results.

The Investment Process. The process for Crisis Services programs receiving investments for the August 1, 2010 year consists of two steps: (1) the Letter of Intent and (2) the Proposal.

First Step: Letter of Intent: The Letter of Intent process is the first step to receiving funding. By submitting a Letter of Intent, an organization or group of organizations working together, proposes a program that contributes to the achievement of outcomes and indicators published in the Blueprint for Change: Crisis Services. These Letters of Intent will be carefully reviewed. During the review United Way may pose clarification questions or ask for additional information. At the conclusion of the review period, the most promising Letters of Intent will be selected for development into detailed Proposals.

Second Step: Proposal: The second step to receiving funding is submission, upon invitation, of a detailed Proposal. Not all Letter of Intent applicants will be invited to submit detailed Proposals. Proposals will be carefully reviewed and investment decisions made.

Letter of Intent Timeline

Key dates leading up to the launch of the 2010 - 2013 investment in Crisis Services include:

January 22, 2010	Blueprint for Change: Crisis Services and Letter of Intent published
January 27, 2010	Informational sessions for Letter of Intent
February 17, 2010	Deadline for emailing LOI clarification questions to LOIcrisis@uwrochester.org .
March 3, 2010	Letters of Intent due to United Way by 12:00 pm
April 9, 2010	Notification of LOI disposition sent by United Way
May 19, 2010	Proposals due from invited agencies
July 23, 2010	Investment notification sent by United Way
August 1, 2010	Investment Year begins

Prerequisites

Applicants for investment funds must meet basic requirements. These requirements will be applied consistently and are not negotiable. All providers selected for funding will be required to sign the standard United Way/Provider Agreement.

Many of the requirements listed below relate to specific terms set forth in that agreement. Setting these requirements as application prerequisites ensures that all selected providers are able and willing to meet the terms of the agreement. The current agreement is available on United Way's website. They include that the provider:

- possess exemption from Federal Income Tax under Section 501c(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code.
- is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.
- will be involved in the *direct* provision of services in Monroe County.
- is committed and able to make measurable improvements for clients in one of the strategies for which United Way will invest funds. Measurable improvements must align with published outcomes and indicators.
- has documented results and related experience and expertise with the strategy area proposed in the Letter of Intent.
- is willing and able to enter into a provider agreement with United Way regarding the provision of services and compliance with United Way requirements including:
 - Submission of reports:
 - (1) Beneficiary reports of client demographic and employer information,
 - (2) Program reports detailing outcomes achieved, and
 - (3) Financial reports showing support, revenue and expenses by funded program
 - Adherence to the Communication Standards.
 - Practicing non-discrimination in hiring and program delivery; demonstration of ability to deliver services in a culturally competent and sensitive way.

Requirements

Strategy Alignment. It is expected that all programs proposed through the Letter of Intent process align with an investment strategy contained within the Blueprint for Change: Crisis Services. Strategies selected for funding are: (1) meeting basic needs and (2) homelessness prevention and housing stability. Aligning with an investment strategy requires including any applicable practices or elements specified in the Blueprint. For example, programs applying to provide crisis assistance services under the "Meeting Basic Needs" strategy must exhibit the quality practices and standards listed for crisis assistance programs in the Blueprint. Additionally, programs must also align with at least one outcome and indicator listed in the Blueprint for Change.

Program and Strategy Evaluation. United Way expects all funded programs to measure and report the impact of their program on clients. Progress toward outcome achievement will be reported to United Way on a regular basis – as frequently as monthly for newly implemented programs and likely quarterly for all others. Additionally, funded programs are expected to work with United Way and our evaluation consultant on the design and implementation of a strategy-wide evaluation. This will likely include providing client level data to the outside evaluator for analysis of program contribution to strategy outcomes as well as overall success of the strategy. It may also require using specific measurement protocols determine by United Way. It is expected that agencies funded that include evidence-based programs participate in United Way’s review of the fidelity of implementation. The strategy evaluation and fidelity reviews will be defined in cooperation with funded agencies for implementation during the investment cycle.

Learning Circles. United Way expects that all funded programs will participate in learning circles with other United Way funded programs focusing on the same strategy. Learning circles are groups of similarly focused programs that meet regularly to increase coordination and share information to increase overall provider knowledge for the benefit of clients and field expertise.

How to Apply

Organizations that meet the prerequisites may apply for funding by submitting a Letter of Intent in accordance with the instructions provided in this guide.

Letter of Intent Components. The Letter of Intent consists of several parts:

- (1) Cover Page – Provides general information about the program
- (2) Narrative – Briefly describes the program being proposed and the projected results
- (3) Budget – Projects program income and expense
- (4) Program Organization Chart – Showing all staff positions involved with the program
- (5) Board of Directors List – list of names, addresses and terms of current board of directors
- (6) IRS Determination Letter – 501(c)(3) letter from IRS
- (7) Most Recently submitted Form 990 – Federal IRS reporting for not for profits
- (8) For programs proposing use of one or more evidence-based programs, a description of the evidence-based program proposed

Submission Requirements. Submission instructions must be followed in order for a Letter of Intent to be considered for funding. The submission requirements note that all Letters of Intent will:

- follow the format prescribed in this Handbook for the cover page, narrative and budget.
- describe programs addressing strategies, outcomes and indicators published in the Blueprint for Change: Crisis Services.
- be complete with no sections left blank.
- be typed in Times New Roman font no smaller than 11 pt.
- not exceed page totals for each narrative section: 5 for narrative and 2 for description of proposed evidence-based programs other than those defined in the Blueprint.
- not include any additional attachments to those listed as component parts of the LOI
- be submitted via email to LOIcrisis@uwrochester.org.
- arrive at the United Way by 12:00 p.m. on March 3, 2010.

Letter of Intent Review Criteria

Letters of Intent will be reviewed by the United Way of Greater Rochester Community Investment staff professionals. During the review and selection process the United Way will be guided by the Crisis Services Blueprint for Change and the following review criteria:

<u>Letter of Intent Review Criteria</u>	<u>Key Questions</u>
Fit with the Blueprint	Does the program and its proposed outcomes fit with the strategies, outcomes and indicators published in the Blueprint?
Strength of Outcomes	What degree of change is expected for the clients served by the program both in the short term and the long term?
Measurability	Are there appropriate measures for the proposed outcomes?
Target Population	Is the population to be served in need of and appropriate for the proposed service?
Probability of Success	Is the program feasible and is it reasonable to suppose it can achieve the proposed outcomes?
Experience	Does the provider have experience achieving strong positive results in programs similar to the one proposed? If using an evidence-based practice, does the provider have experience with implementing the selected practice or similar evidence-based programs?
Reasonableness of Cost	Is the budget reasonable and realistic? Is there a need for United Way funding?

Information gathered through clarification conversations that may take place as part of the Letter of Intent review will also be considered in making the final selection of applicants invited to develop Letters of Intent into detailed Proposals.

**United Way of Greater Rochester
Crisis Services Letter of Intent Cover Page**

Organization Requesting Funds: _____
Program Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone #: _____ E-Mail: _____

Chief Professional Officer Name: _____
Chief Professional Officer Title: _____

If the program is being offered by a collaborative of organizations, please list each organization

UW Investment \$ _____ Total Program Budget \$ _____

Number of Individuals to be directly served by the program annually: _____
If the program serves families, please indicate the number to be served annually: _____

Brief Summary of program (limit: 50 words):

Put a checkmark by the indicator(s) your program addresses:

Sufficiency of Food and Shelter

- Immediate food, clothing and shelter needs are met
- Increased screening, access to and eligibility assessments for government resources and public benefits
- Increased knowledge of, linkages to and utilization of community resources

Decreased Homelessness

- Decreased barriers to housing
- Increased access to permanent housing and support services to transition out of homelessness
- Increased retention of individuals and families in permanent housing
- Decreased incidence of repeated homelessness

Be certain to include required attachments:

- (1) Budget
- (2) Program Organization Chart
- (3) Board of Directors List
- (4) IRS Determination Letter
- (5) Most recently submitted Form 990

Letter of Intent Narrative

The Letter of Intent narrative describes the program being proposed to United Way for funding consideration. The narrative is limited to five (5), typed (Times New Roman, 11pt font minimum), 8.5 by 11 inch pages addressing the following:

- The characteristics of the people (target population – including persons with disabilities) that the program will serve, including why they are in need of the services proposed and how you will engage them in program services.
- The program’s methodology. Identify the evidence-based practice and curricula being used (if applicable). Briefly outline the types of activities, the frequency and duration, the point when services end, and the average length of service.
- If the program is using an evidence-based practice or promising practice, please outline the steps that you will take to implement the evidence-based or promising practice with fidelity.
- Describe the results (outcomes) this program intends to achieve and how the program will measure them. List at least one program level outcome (maximum of three). Each program level outcome must show progress towards one of the indicators checked on the cover page.
- Describe the staffing (paid and volunteer) involved in conducting and supporting the activities.
- Describe the organization’s (organizations’) relevant experience with programs like the one proposed and the results achieved.
- If the program is using an evidence-based practice, please list any previous experience with implementing the selected evidence-based practice or other evidence-based practices.
- Describe why United Way funding is necessary to support the program and the specific role that United Way funding plays such as covering a service that is not reimbursable through other funding.

Evidence-Based Practices Description. For programs using one or more evidence-based programs, please provide an overview of the Evidence-Based Programs, how it meets United Way’s definition of Evidence-Based, and how it is appropriate for the target population and methodology being proposed. Include a list of web references to independent research and/or websites that have designated the program as a model program. The description of evidence-based programs is limited to two (2) typed (Times New Roman, 11pt font minimum), 8.5 by 11 inch pages.

Instructions for Completing the Budget

The Letter of Intent Budget is contained within an MSExcel spreadsheet and projects the revenue and expense associated with the program being proposed. The Letter of Intent Budget is an abbreviated version of United Way’s Detailed Application Budget and thus, will look familiar to currently funded providers. To complete the Letter of Intent Budget:

- Develop an annual budget to correspond with the program narrative.
- Where indicated, record the name of the organization requesting funds and proposed program.

- For each income and expense line, enter a whole dollar amount in the “Proposed Budget” column.
- For income and expense lines for which no dollars are budgeted, record a 0 (zero).
- For each staff category record the number of full time equivalents (FTEs) being budgeted in the column labeled “FTE”. Use your own organization’s definition of full-time.
- Provide detail for staff salaries and other expenses on worksheet 2 of the budget template.
- Where indicated, record the program’s share of indirect general & management (administrative) expense.
- Record all totals and subtotals indicated, including the surplus/deficit resulting from any difference between projected income and expense.