

**UNITED WAY OF GREATER ROCHESTER  
LETTER OF INTENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Updated February 18, 2010

**1. Concern about the timeline regarding notification of funding (July) & the difficulties it might create regarding either program closings or startups (staffing issues as well)**

*The purpose of the two-stage application is to provide applicants an opportunity to learn as early as possible if their application is competitive and under consideration. To ensure transparency and proper stewardship, we do require the time defined to share all applications and recommendations with our advisory team, the community investment cabinet and the Board of Directors. Per the timeline, notification related to LOIs will be made in April. Programs invited to progress to step two, will work with the program officer to develop a reasonable timeframe to begin a new program or close an existing one.*

**2. Clarify the page requirements (margins, font-type, front & back, etc)**

*1 inch margins; 11 point or larger Times New Roman; each side page counts as a page (so front and back is two pages); single spaced.*

**3. What constitutes “direct service”?**

*Generally, direct service is viewed as a service which is provided directly to a distinct consumer group, for example, a crisis services program that provides adults with classes on budgeting is a direct service. A program that might train the staff that provide the budgeting classes is considered in-direct.*

**4. After a Letter of Intent has been submitted, and based on dialogue with the Community Investment staff, will applicants be asked to modify their proposals?**

*The Community Investment team will work with applicants to clarify proposals as well as ensure that the proposal reflects a scale and implementation that may be supported within the scope of United Way’s overall investment portfolio.*

**5. If United Way sees great ideas in the Letter of Intent process, will UW work with the applicants to further understand or develop those proposals?**

*The Community Investment team will work with applicants to clarify proposals and suggest additional development as long as the ideas align with the Blueprint and are within the scope of United Way’s overall investment portfolio.*

**6. What will United Way do with great ideas (“ah-has!”) proposed by applicants from which other providers might benefit?**

*The United Way will welcome new ideas and thinking in proposals. We will ask providers to share their ideas and findings as part of a Learning Circle that will be formed among providers being funded to support the Blueprint.*

**7. Describe “other support” (as opposed to funding).**

*The United Way views its resources in three major categories: funding/grants; advocacy (including public policy as well as convening opportunities) and volunteering. Specific information relating to United Way’s advocacy and volunteer strategies is found in the Blueprint.*

**8. Will United Way fund non-evidence based programming?**

*Yes. As there are no evidence-based programs for the strategies defined in the blueprint, it is expected that promising practices and programs that align with the strategies, outcomes, and indicators in the Blueprint will be considered for funding.*

**9. Please define “evidence-based”.**

*The definition can be found in the Blueprint glossary.*

**10. Will United Way consider funding evidence-based programs not listed in the Blueprint? In the application submission, are write-ups or descriptions required of these evidence-based practices or promising practices?**

*Yes and Yes. See the “Evidence-Based Practices Description” section of the LOI handbook for additional information.*

**11. Can applicants propose or apply for funds to receive training so that they can deliver evidence-based programming?**

*If in order to implement an evidenced-based direct service program with fidelity, an applicant needs financial support to provide staff training, that will be considered in the grant.*

**12. Are funds available for evidence based program planning as well as implementation?**

*If financial support is required for implementation of an evidenced-based direct service program and/or to start a new program it should be included in the LOI for funding consideration.*

**13. How detailed or rigorous a program evaluation should the applicant budget for?**

*All programs are expected to submit program-level outcomes as part of the application process and to measure and report them to United Way if funded. Programs utilizing an evidence-based program model should use outcomes and measurement protocols provided by the evidence-based program disseminator whenever feasible. In cases where the applicant is proposing a program that is not evidenced-based, a higher level of evaluation will be required. However, United Way will be partnering with all funded providers and providing evaluation expertise and support. The evaluation methodology and budget can be refined further in the proposal phase as well as after acceptance.*

**14. How much time should an applicant budget for participating in Learning Circles?**

*Because this is a new concept, we can only estimate the time that may be required. Assuming monthly meetings of 2 hours, plus 2 hours prep for each meeting, you can budget 48 hours of time for participation.*

**15. How will United Way disseminate information generated by the Learning Circles?**

*Information from the Learning Circles will be posted on our website.*

**16. If a proposed service is funded by other sources, will it still be considered for funding?**

*Yes. We don't expect to be the sole funder in all programs. However, when we look at funding a program for multiple years, it's important to note that if other funding is lost, it may impact our ability to sustain support for the program.*

**17. Will United Way emphasize proposals where UW is a significant funder of the program?**

*No. Please see the review criteria in the LOI handbook. This is not one of them.*

**18. Can an applicant submit a Letter of Intent for a current program that aligns with the Blueprint strategies?**

*Yes, you do not have to create a totally new program if the existing program aligns with the Blueprint strategies. You will need to submit a Letter of Intent describing a current program in order for it to be considered for funding in the August 1, 2010 investment year.*

**19. Does United Way funding emphasize maintaining existing programs or will they be emphasizing new programs?**

*We will fund programs that most closely align with the Blueprint and meet the selection criteria outlined in the LOI handbook. There is no priority given to existing programs. Please note that some existing programs may already offer one or more programs that align with the Blueprint, or choose to modify the existing program for alignment.*

**20. How much funding will be available for implementing the Blueprint?**

*We do not know how much funding will be available as that is dependent upon unknowns like future campaign results.*

**21. Has United Way made any determination about the size/dollar amount of the grants?**

*No, there are no pre-determined minimum or maximum limits.*

**22. There will be differing costs per service recipient, depending on the program provided. Will United Way be considering those different costs as proposals are reviewed?**

*One of the review criteria relates to reasonableness of cost- please see page 6 of the LOI handbook. We understand that what is a reasonable per program participant will vary depending on the program being offered.*

**23. Will United Way set a dollar limit per service recipient?**

*No.*

**24. Does United Way recommend a specific % for overhead?**

*No. United Way requires that an organization accurately reflect its overhead costs in any budget submitted for funding consideration.*

**25. How should the Letter of Intent budget reflect future year budget issues that would be different from a first-year budget (such as start up costs, training, etc)? How much of this information should be included in the Letter of Intent budget?**

*The Letter of Intent budget should reflect a year's operating budget. One-time start up costs may be listed at the bottom of the budget form.*

**26. In the proposed LOI budget, in the category listing county government grants, do county dollars that reimburse services provided get entered into this category, or, only actual grant dollars? If not entered into this category, do they get listed as Program Fees?**

*Use the "County Government Grants" line to capture income from County government departments, including both grants and reimbursement for services. Use the "Program Service Fees" line for fees paid by the client or a nongovernmental 3<sup>rd</sup> party, such as a private insurer.*

**27. If my agency is a donor designated recipient of United Way funding and submits a Letter of Intent as a lead agency, will the donor designated money be deducted from a successful grant submission?**

*Donor designated dollars are the first dollars toward an allocation.*

- 28. On the cover page, where we place checkmarks by the outcome and indicators a program addresses, do we need to list a specific outcome for each indicator checked off? Or, is this informational for United Way but that we may not necessarily list an indicator for each one, but for example, may list two outcomes for one indicator and not necessarily an outcome for one of the indicators checked off?**

*You do not need to provide a program level outcome for each indicator checked off on the cover page.*

- 29. Is the IRS determination letter the one we would have gotten from them recognizing our not-for-profit status?**

*Yes.*

- 30. Is any 501c3 eligible to apply or do they need to have an existing relationship with United Way?**

*Any 501(c)(3) is eligible; a pre-existing relationship with United Way is not required.*

- 31. How would United Way like to see collaboration or partnerships reflected in the Letter of Intent process? Example: lead agencies**

*A competitive Letter of Intent submitted by a collaborative would include a lead agency acting as the fiduciary and monitor of outcomes. In the case of a collaborative submitting a Letter of Intent for an evidence based program, it is critical for the lead agency to oversee implementation and on-going fidelity. On the LOI cover page, the lead agency should be listed next to "Organization Requesting Funds"; partner agencies should be listed further below in the collaborative section.*

- 32. Will United Way consider funding proposals that include partnerships or collaborations with partner organizations who haven't or can't receive UW funds (example: public entities such as MCDHS, MCOFA, etc.)?**

*Yes. As long as there is a designated fiduciary lead organization that is eligible, we are open to funding collaboratives that include a diverse set of partners.*

- 33. Who is conducting the Letter of Intent review process?**

*The Community Investment Staff will conduct the Letter of Intent review process using the review criteria outlined in the Letter of Intent handbook. Volunteers will also be involved in the review process.*

- 34. When United Way reviews the Letters of Intent, will United Way score and rank the applications, inviting back higher-ranked proposals until the funding is allocated?**

*The review criteria are in the Letter of Intent handbook. We do not use a ranking system or point scoring system. We will determine which Letters of Intent we would like to see full proposals developed from, in some cases, with certain modifications to the program originally proposed.*

- 35. What will the full proposal format look like? Like the last cycle?**

*The format for the full proposal will be similar to the ones used for previous blueprints.*

- 36. Can applicants submit proposals for multiple strategies? If they submit a Letter of Intent for 2 strategies, does that constitute 1 application or 2?**

*Yes, applicants may submit a Letter of Intent for multiple strategies. A separate Letter of Intent should be submitted for each individual program. It is possible that one program could encompass both strategies, in which case 1 Letter of Intent should be submitted.*

- 37. Can an applicant submit more than 1 Letter of Intent?**

*There is no limit to the number of Letters of Intent that may be submitted by an applicant.*

**38. If an applicant wants funding for multiple programs, can they submit multiple LOIs?**

*Yes.*

**39. Are multiple LOIs required for multiple programs?**

*A separate Letter of Intent should be submitted for each individual program for which the applicant is seeking United Way funds.*

**40. Can multiple program sites be included in a single LOI?**

*Yes.*

**41. Are the strategies presented in the Blueprint in rank order of importance?**

*No.*

**42. Is there any collaboration amongst the other funding partners?**

*Other major funders were involved in the input sessions, in stakeholder meetings, and as United Way volunteers.*

**43. What is the chance of receiving funding if an applicant is asked to submit a full proposal?**

*There is no predetermined percentage or number of full proposals that will be funded.*

**44. Will United Way help coordinate services or should providers take charge of that?**

*At the LOI stage providers should coordinate services within the program presented for funding consideration.*

**45. Will United Way consider geographic distribution of sites across the City?**

*Yes.*

**46. Is there a preferred format to be used for the information required for the LOI, i.e., board member list, narrative, etc.?**

*The format requirements for all components of the LOI are contained in the LOI handbook which is located on the website at [www.uwrochester.org](http://www.uwrochester.org) in the "Agency Resources" section.*

**47. We frequently work with adults and their families. Should we report both adults and his/her family in the number served section of the LOI Cover Page?**

*Yes.*

**48. On the cover page where United Way asks for the number of individuals served and the number of families served, is it acceptable to only indicate one of those – does the applicant have to fill out both?**

*Each applicant needs to fill in at least one. If a program serves both individuals and families, the applicant should fill in both.*

**49. Will United Way send out a confirmation of receipt of Letters of Intent to the applicants?**

*Yes, via email within two working days of receipt.*

**50. I don't have my 990 and IRS letter in electronic format; what should I do?**

*Organizations unable to transfer their IRS determination letter and IRS form 990 submission to electronic format should mail paper copies to United Way of Greater Rochester so that they arrive by the application due date.. The address for mailing is United Way of Greater Rochester, Attn: Community Investment LOI, 75 College Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607. If necessary, the*

*board list and program organization chart may also be submitted this way. However, the cover page, narrative and budget must be submitted electronically.*

**51. Please provide further information about the Synergy Fund.**

*Please see the Synergy Fund policy posted in the “Agency Resources” section of United Way’s website at [www.uwrochester.org](http://www.uwrochester.org).*

**52. If we submit more than 1 LOI, should we submit multiple attachments?**

*Attachments focused on the agency, including the IRS determination letter, 990, and board list for the agency need only be submitted once. Program specific attachments including the program organization chart are required for each LOI.*

**53. Is the LOI budget a standard UW budget? Is it available online?**

*The LOI budget is consistent with the standard UW budget but not identical – the LOI budget requires less detail. It is available on-line, in the “Agency Resources” section of United Way’s website [www.uwrochester.org](http://www.uwrochester.org).*

**54. Will funding decisions change dramatically? Will there be major shifts in the portfolio? Will United Way’s focus narrow?**

*One of the purposes of the Blueprint process is to provide more focus to our investment process. Depending on what LOIs are submitted, the portfolio will likely narrow.*

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**55. What if my agency has recently merged and we don’t have a 990 for the new organization, should we submit the 990 for both?**

*Yes.*

**56. Is there a preference for single or multiple submissions?**

*Neither. A separate Letter of Intent should be submitted for each individual program for which the applicant is seeking United Way funds. Applicants may apply for funds for one or more programs.*

**57. Can you describe COMET in further detail?**

*COMET is a web-based data collection and analysis tool. COMET allows programs to collect, analyze, and present information about program participants and their families; provides immediate, real-time feedback; conduct simple assessments; reduces time spent on administrative tasks (e.g. entering information more than once and hunting for “lost” information); and allows easy access to information.*

*A subset of programs funded through the current process may be required to use COMET to track program data. This information may be used by an outside evaluator to assess the overall impact of United Way’s funding in a Blueprint strategy. United Way will cover the costs associated with use of COMET.*

**58. If you are submitting an LOI in investment areas, will the program have to meet all of the elements listed?**

*The “Meeting Basic Needs” and “Homeless Prevention and Housing Stability” strategies list the types of programs UWGR will consider funding. Applicants applying for funds for crisis-assistance, youth emergency shelter, or domestic violence shelters must include, at a minimum, the bulleted elements listed for the applicable program type.*

*There are no minimum practices or standards required for legal services programs or homelessness prevention programs; the bullets listed for these program types are examples of what will be considered for funding.*

**59. Is there a set expectation about how many LOIs move to a full proposal?**

*No.*

**60. Are there any guarantees of funding if asked to move forward?**

*No.*

**61. All questions must be submitted to the e-mail address?**

*Yes, questions concerning the LOI process must be submitted to [LOICrisis@uwrochester.org](mailto:LOICrisis@uwrochester.org).*

**62. Does this plan have a specific age demographic?**

*No.*

**63. What is the total amount available and range of funding requests?**

*The total amount available is not yet determined and will depend, in part, in the dollars available through the 2010 United Way-Red Cross Campaign. There is no minimum or maximum limit on the amount of funding that may be requested.*

**64. Who is the decision making team?**

*The Community Investment Staff and volunteers will conduct the Letter of Intent review process using the review criteria outlined in the Letter of Intent handbook.*

**65. What is the expectation associated with Learning Circles?**

*Learning Circles involve staff from United Way-funded crisis programs. They will meet regularly to increase coordination among their agencies and share information about emerging programs. Because this is a new concept, we can only estimate the time that may be required. Assuming monthly meetings of 2 hours, plus 2 hours prep for each meeting, you can budget 48 hours of time for participation.*

**66. If there is a population with a high need of services, will United Way consider funding for that group?**

*One of the criteria used to review the LOI's is that the population targeted is in need of and appropriate for the proposed services. The most competitive Letters of Intent will align with at least one investment strategy and outcome and indicator contained in the Blueprint, and satisfy all of the review criteria listed in the Letter of Intent handbook.*

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**67. In the Crisis Services Letter of Intent Handbook, page 4, Prerequisites, bullet 7  
Submission of Reports**

**1) Beneficiary reports**

**Can you elaborate on "Beneficiary report" and "employer information".**

*United Way will periodically require beneficiary reports detailing information about program participants, including age, race/ethnicity, gender, zip code of residence, household*

*income, and their employers. Reporting format is prescribed and will be provided in advance of any required reporting period.*