



INNOVATION GRANTS: SYNERGY FUND

United Way is building out a dynamic line of support that is nimble and responsive to immediate and emerging community needs. One of these lines of support is our Synergy Fund.

PURPOSE

To catalyze innovative social and cultural change efforts that support human development and self-sufficiency for the people we serve.

HOW IT WILL HELP

United Way's Synergy Fund offers technical assistance and implementation support for mergers and affiliations.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

United Way's Synergy Fund was designed to support nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations in Monroe County with organizational transitions, restructuring and collaborations to increase operational efficiency and improve program services for their clients and our community.

Our Synergy Fund provides supports that include technical assistance and/or financial resources for one-time, out-of-pocket costs incurred toward the exploration and possible implementation of an affiliation or merger.

The actual level of support from the Synergy Fund will vary based on need. Organizations are not expected to, nor will they automatically move from, Exploratory to Implementation support. Program-level collaborations that do not involve a fundamental shift in the organizations' business model are not eligible for funds.

HOW IT WORKS

Requests for the Synergy Fund are accepted on a rolling basis and can be made by the designated lead organization through direct inquiry or referral. United Way will initially respond to an inquiry by phone to the respective executive directors and/or board chairpersons of each interested organizations, after which an invitation to submit a proposal for consideration may be extended.

All proposals will be submitted through an online application process. Each application will be reviewed for completeness, risks, benefits, success metrics and long-term impact. Where necessary, confidentiality agreements and due diligence follow-up through in-person meetings, site visits and/or phone calls will be conducted during the application review process. Recommendations will be submitted to the United Way Community Impact Cabinet for consideration and decision. Approved applicants must agree and adhere to any and all grant terms, metrics of success, monitoring and reporting requirements.

APPLICATION KEY ELEMENTS AND REVIEW CRITERIA

The following elements comprise the Synergy Fund application and serve as the general criteria used to assess applications for Exploratory and Implementation grants.

Contact Information

Point of contact name, title, organization, postal address, phone and email for each organization and indicate which organization will be the lead organization for this affiliation. If an organization has multiple sites or locations and provide contact information for each.

Need Assessment

Description of the circumstance, situation and/or determination that led to this request. Include any pre-planning or alignment activities that occurred and the level of commitment and collaboration from each organization.

Narrative

Please briefly describe the process used, the affiliation that has been agreed to, and the current status of the project. Attach a copy of the board resolutions to affiliate and, if available, the affiliation plan along with the IRS determination letters of the affiliating organizations.

Benefits and Risks

Describe the improved/increased capacity, service delivery, effectiveness, and/or financial health expected from this affiliation. What is the principal benefit of the affiliation? What are the potential risks associated with the affiliation?

Proposal Cost

What are the primary costs associated with the complete affiliation? What is the estimated total cost of the complete affiliation? What are the expected one-time costs of implementing the affiliation? Please provide a brief budget indicating the anticipated one-time implementation costs. Please note that Synergy Grants cannot exceed \$25,000.

Funding

In addition to a possible grant from our fund, how do you expect to cover the affiliation costs? Have other funders been approached for support? If so, please indicate requests made. Have you secured any funding commitments? If so, please indicate the source and amount.

Timeline

Please identify major milestones for this activity, the expected date for completion and any dependencies or circumstances that are time sensitive.

Plan for Sustainability and Success

Please describe how success will be measured and what impact will be sustained and measured over time within the organizations and the community. Are there any opportunities for sector-wide learning regarding repositioning activities that may be shared, informally or formally?

Additional Information (Requested upon Approval)

- Formal board approval for the planned transaction by each organization
- A formal grant agreement and plan detailing the scope of the transaction
- Implementation steps such as establishing a timeline, and pre- and post-transaction budgets
- An agreed-upon set of metrics to measure the success of the transaction (and the associated reporting templates and governance structure to ensure that such metrics are produced and acted upon)

TIMING

Applications will be reviewed at various points throughout the year. The application due dates for the remainder of 2019 are September 11, October 30, and December 4. Exact due dates for 2020 will be forthcoming in February, April, and June.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Jennifer Cathy, Chief Impact Officer at jennifer.cathy@uwrochester.org or (585) 242-6561.