

United Way of Western Connecticut, Inc. Community Investment Policy

I. Introduction and Overview of Policies

Formed in July, 2007, the United Way of Western Connecticut, Inc. is a merger of Housatonic-Shepaug United Way, United Way of Northern Fairfield County and United Way of Stamford. It is a local, nonprofit, private corporation serving 17 communities in Northern Fairfield and Southern Litchfield counties, along with the city of Stamford. The Board of Directors is composed of community leaders from all three communities (serving on an unpaid basis) who are responsible for policy determination, reviewing recommendations of United Way committees and providing general direction to the organization.

UWWC, Inc funds both local community efforts as well as broader regional initiatives. Each community has a local Community Council of business and community members charged with determining local needs and how best to address those needs. Dollars raised locally will be invested in the community where they were raised. UWWC, Inc is also uniquely positioned to explore regional needs and to support efforts to address those needs, including seeking regional funding for these initiatives. In keeping with the inclusive nature of UWWC, Inc, regional funding decisions will include community members from each of our three main geographic locations.

Mission: We are a leader in mobilizing resources to improve lives and our communities

Community Impact Overview

United Ways have undergone an evolutionary process from being known as successful fund raisers and fund distributors to a higher calling of developing lasting change in our communities. More than ever, the methods of accountability of local nonprofits, including United Way, to donors, residents and beneficiaries of services have been the drivers of strategic direction. With this in mind, the United Way of Western Connecticut, Inc. is undergoing an important transformation in how it achieves impact with its investments.

Today, the United Way of Western Connecticut, Inc. makes an impact in two ways. First, we work to create lasting changes in community conditions by focusing on underlying causes of problems. By conducting research to inform many constituencies about the nature and scope of community problems, we lay the foundation for getting results no one can accomplish alone. Together, businesses, government, neighborhoods, faith groups, nonprofits and caring individuals and United Way focus on some of the most important issues facing our communities.

Using data to inform their decisions, United Way volunteers from all walks of life in collaboration with United Way's professional staff narrow and focus their work on

selected issues where we believe together we can make a difference over a defined period of time. We will then make investment plans that reflect what it will take to “move the needle” in a given area. As measurable community change occurs and environmental factors change, the issues may change and investment decisions will be altered.

Second, we work to help individuals in need through programs that stabilize their lives. United Way supports hundreds of vital services provided by funded partners to create better lives for kids, families, seniors, people in crisis and others in our communities. These biennial investments in well-managed agencies are designed to provide critical funding for a service infrastructure that supports our focus of Education, Health and Income, as well as other key community services.

This edition of United Way of Western Connecticut, Inc.’s Community Investment Policies and Procedures describes the way in which we make funding decisions and the methods we use to fund programs important to our community. It includes information about our partnerships, expectations of funded programs and outcome measurement as well as information about the annual campaign.

II. Partner Organizations

Partner Organizations

UWWC, Inc., in keeping with its mission to mobilize resources to improve lives and our communities, will identify and solicit the participation of the best potential partners to ensure positive community change is achieved. Partnership will be based on relationships that achieve a common community goal through collective efforts.

“Partnership” is a relationship between UWWC, Inc. and an organization or group that provides resources to accomplish a shared goal in the community.

A “community partner” is any organization or group that contributes resources and works with UWWC, Inc. in a coordinated effort to achieve a shared community goal.

There are a variety of community partners, depending on the role they play in the community and the relationship with United Way.

Initiative partners are organizations utilizing a focused approach to bring about community change related to a priority issue identified by United Way. United Way may provide funding to some initiative partners.

Program partners are funded organizations offering essential services, predominately in the areas of Education, Health and Income, which stabilize the health and human service system in our communities.

Coalition partners are organizations that help United Way mobilize, educate, advocate, and conduct research on priority issues. United Way may raise funds on behalf of some coalitions and may choose to join coalitions organized by others.

Corporate/Sponsorship partners are organizations that invest in and help United Way leverage resources and increase its visibility in the community.

Partnership Expectations and Responsibilities

The United Way and its partners share responsibility for improving the quality of life in our communities by making available efficient and effective services addressing important community issues. While there are mutual obligations, United Way and its partners have specific expectations of each other that contribute to the success of the relationship.

Program Partner Agency Expectations

Program Partner Agencies can expect UWWC, Inc. to:

- Conduct an annual campaign.
- Communicate openly and promote United Way's relationship with agencies in a positive light
- Award funding through a program evaluation process to ensure maximum community benefits
- Offer support beyond funding (for example, letters of support, advocacy, assistance with merger opportunities, board recruitment)
- Provide technical assistance with outcome measurement and other issues where appropriate
- Convene potential collaborators
- Keep an open dialogue with regard to the future direction of UWWC, Inc.
- Encourage high standards and promote greater efficiency in all agencies individually and collectively

UWWC, Inc.'s expectations of Program, Initiative and Coalition Partners

UWWC, Inc, expects **all** partners to

- Support the UWWC, Inc. vision and mission
- Speak positively of their relationships with United Way
- Articulate their relationship with United Way
- Assist in annual fundraising campaign that supports community-wide efforts

UWWC, Inc. expects Initiative Partners and Program Partners to

- Comply with UWWC, Inc. policies and procedures
- Use the United Way logo on website and agency printed materials according to marketing guidelines.
- Offer a link to the United Way website on the agency web page.
- Be willing to participate in the United Way speakers' bureau
- Maintain a responsible governing board

- Keep accurate and complete financial and program records and submit them to UWWC, Inc. in a timely manner
- Develop an outcome plan and provide measurable results
- Share responsibility for fund development in addition to annual campaign to sustain long-term impact efforts.

In addition, UWWC, Inc. encourages Coalition partners to:

- Comply with UWWC, Inc. policies and procedures
- Use a United Way logo on website and printed materials.
- Offer a link to the United Way website on their web page
- Participate in the United Way speakers' bureau
- Maintain a responsible governing board
- Keep accurate and complete financial and program records
- Develop an outcome plan and provide measurable results
- Share responsibility for fund development in addition to annual campaign to sustain long-term impact efforts

Engaging New Partners

The United Way of Western Connecticut, Inc. engages a variety of organizations in a variety of ways in order to set community goals and advance the common good. New partners are engaged based on roles they might play in impacting United Way's priority issues or meeting community needs. Some partners may be eligible to receive funding from the United Way; if so, basic standards must be met.

Terminating Funding Relationships

By partners: Community partners may terminate their partnership with UWWC, Inc. at any time by written resignation. UWWC, Inc. funding will cease upon the effective date of termination. Funds intended for use after date of termination shall be returned to UWWC, Inc. The UWWC, Inc. leadership as appropriate will offer to meet with representatives of the community partner(s) to fully understand the resignation decision and its funding implications.

By UWWC, Inc.: UWWC, Inc. reserves the right to withhold, adjust or cancel investment payments as well as defund programs based upon the UWWC, Inc. leadership's determination of a Partner Agency's willful failure to comply with these policies or the specific terms of the funding agreement.

III. Investment Criteria and Procedures

Overview of Investment Criteria

The Review Process continues to be the hallmark of United Way's decisions about program funding. Volunteers, including members of our local Community Councils formulate ground-level recommendations for funding. These recommendations are based on an understanding of the priorities and goals of each Council, as well as program outcome plans and results. Other factors include the need of the target population,

collaborations with other organizations, cost-saving strategies, and diversity in all aspects of the organization, especially in program services. UWWC, Inc. does not fund capital projects or endowments.

Dollars available for distribution are based on United Way's annual campaign and other funding raising results, such as grants.

Outcome Measurement

UWWC, Inc. is accountable to its donors to ensure contributions are used wisely, deliver results, and produce maximum impact. To ensure accountability, UWWC, Inc. directs funds strategically where they will achieve the greatest results. For UWWC, Inc. this means placing greater focus on both program and community outcomes. These two measurement systems assist United Way in measuring the impact funded programs make on specific populations and in measuring the impact United Way is having on changing community conditions.

Program and Initiative partners receiving funding from United Way are required to submit outcome measurement data, including an outcome evaluation plan at the beginning of the grant period specifying data collection and measurement methods, followed by outcome evaluation results during the mid-cycle review for bi-annual funding and at the end of the grant period. Initiative funding reporting requirements may be more frequent.

Outcome measurement is a major factor in funding decisions. However, UWWC, Inc. will not expect outcome measurement to include experimental research designs, often involving control groups and other timely expensive methods, to prove that the program/impact initiative alone caused the outcome.

Outcomes: Changes sought in knowledge, attitudes, motivation, skills, behavior, condition, status or other characteristics of a specific individual or group of individuals.

Community impact: Improving lives by mobilizing communities to create lasting changes in community conditions.

Community change: Change in policy, practice, resource allocation or other characteristic of a community system or institution, association, organization, network, neighborhood environment, or other community element.

Community outcomes: Changes in a defined community population brought about by changing conditions in the community

Program outcomes: Changes that program activities intend to create in program participants

Procedures for Investing Resources

“Community investment” is the term UWWC, Inc. uses to refer to the process by which monies are disbursed for a specific period of time. Program funding and initiative funding are the primary mechanisms used to award funds to community partners.

Funding Categories

Program funding is the means by which funds are awarded to address issues by United Way partners through programs the community deems essential for United Way to support. This funding is determined on a two-year cycle in each community and reviewed annually by United Way volunteer leadership based on community need, knowledge of the service, and outcome performance. Program funding is available only to 501c3 nonprofits.

Initiative funding is the primary vehicle to address issues of significant importance to the community against which measurable community outcomes can be achieved. These grants may be issued at any time and be valid for varying lengths of time. However, even if a grant or contract is issued for multiple years, it will be reviewed at least annually to determine continued funding.

Because of the nature of initiative funding, which typically seeks to make broader systemic changes in our community, efforts are not limited exclusively to 501c3 organizations. Types of organizations from which United Way may solicit proposals for initiatives include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Community partners;
- Other nonprofit health and human service organizations;
- Collaboratives;
- Universities and community colleges, including schools of social work, urban planning, public health, medicine, etc.;
- Government agencies (including federal, state, county, city or regional organizations, such as the Council of Elected Officials);
- Neighborhood associations;
- School districts (including individual schools, departments such as literacy enrichment or tutoring programs, or parent-teacher organizations);
- Health care entities, including hospital districts, hospitals, clinics, private practitioners, medical societies, and associations;
- Faith-based organizations, such as churches, synagogues, mosques, or associations of these organizations;
- Private firms, consultants or contractors (such as medical practitioners, website designer, marketing firm);
- Corporations.

Whether seeking funds through program funding or initiative funding, all organizations must submit documents as requested for review and approval as a partner. Typically, these documents will be submitted through a Letter of Intent process.

Funding Methodology

UWWC, Inc. believes that the method of funding to program and initiative partners should be flexible to maximize the impact of United Way funds. Therefore, UWWC, Inc. may use any one of the following methods to establish funding relationships with the most appropriate providers.

Request for Proposal: solicitation of competitive proposals from agencies and organizations to provide specific programs or services. These proposals may be solicited for biennial program funding and for more specific initiative funding.

RFPs for program funding are generally released fourth quarter of even numbered years (2008, 2010, etc), and are due to the respective UWWC, Inc. office early the following year. Specific timelines and requirements will be communicated during the launch of the new funding cycle. Late submissions may not be considered for funding.

In addition, the United Way may issue targeted RFPs at any time, with the intent of funding a particular initiative based on community needs. Because of the targeted nature of these RFPs, outcomes will be more directive.

Direct Purchase of Service: procurement method that provides flexibility and effective management of resources by reimbursing an organization for a defined number of services. In these situations, a contract or vendor agreement outlining agreed upon deliverables will be issued.

Letters of Intent

Depending on the nature of the initiative and the grant, the United Way may first request letters of intent from the community and then invite certain agencies to submit a more comprehensive RFP. However, the United Way reserves the right to invite specific partner agencies to apply for funding at any time.

Reporting Requirements

All partners receiving funds from UWWC, Inc. are required to submit financial and program data throughout the grant process. Failure to honor deadlines may have funding implications. Typical documents include agency and program budgets, annual audits, and interim progress or outcomes reports.

Program partners receiving funding through the biennial process must submit requested reports during the mid-cycle process in order to confirm continuation of funding. Initiatives partners must complete interim reports as agreed between UWWC, Inc. and the organization. If implementation of the program and progress toward stated outcomes is deemed insufficient, UWWC, Inc. reserves the right to cease funding for the program.

If, for any reason, required information cannot be submitted by the specified deadline, partners are to notify the United Way staff. Funding disbursements may be withheld if

information is submitted late, is inadequate or incomplete or if the program partner continually fails to meet deadlines.

Financial Review

Whether seeking funding as a program or through an initiative, a thorough financial review of the agency will be conducted to ensure the financial stability of the organization.

Anti-Terrorism Compliance

All organizations who seek funding or vendor services from the United Way must certify that all United Way funds and donations will be used in compliance with all applicable anti-terrorist financing and asset control laws, statutes and executive orders. Any organization that does not certify such, or who is identified through a national watch list will not receive funds from the United Way, including donor designations.

Non-discrimination

Agencies seeking and receiving grants from United Way are required to have a policy approved by the governing board of the agency and to demonstrate a practice of non-discrimination, in the selection of its board members, volunteers, committee members or staff and in the delivery of services on the basis of race, color, creed, age, religion, gender, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity or veterans status.

This policy does not prohibit any agency from operating specific programs based on age, gender, health, disability, or other characteristics designed to meet the specific needs of targeted populations. The program, however, must be open to all people within those targeted populations. Faith-based organizations which provide services to the community as a whole, such as day care/preschool, counseling or basic needs, are eligible to apply for funding. However, they must not actively promote or require their own faith or the adherence of any religious practice or belief in the provision of those services.

Site visits

Site visits may be conducted by United Way staff and volunteers to community partners receiving funding at least once during the two-year funding cycle. New programs, or programs experiencing difficulties, may be visited more frequently at the discretion of the United Way and volunteers. The purpose of these visits is to gain greater understanding of programs funded by the Community Councils through firsthand interaction with agency staff and volunteers.

Funding Agreements with partners

To ensure understanding and cooperation between UWWC, Inc. and funded partners, a funding agreement is to be signed at the start of every grant period by authorized representatives of the program partners.

Payment of Funding Commitment

Funding commitments made to organizations receiving program funding will be paid out in equally divided monthly installments. Payment amounts and schedules for other methods of funding may be negotiated between UWWC, Inc. and the partner. For instance, initiative funding may be disbursed quarterly following a discussion between the partner and UWWC, Inc. on the progress made to date. Other payment methodologies may include cost reimbursement or performance-based unit rate grants or contracts.

Funding Commitment Disclaimer

Funding available for distribution by United Way of Western Connecticut, Inc. is contingent each year upon the success of the annual campaign and other fund raising opportunities. Funding commitments made to partners are also contingent upon a periodic review in which sufficient progress towards outcomes and performance standards is evident. Partners must also be in compliance with United Way's policies, procedures and expectations, as specified in this manual.

Appeals

Because of the extensive, community-based nature of the UWWC, Inc. funding review process, all decisions made by the volunteer reviewers and approved by both local Community Councils and the board are final.

IV. United Way Campaign

Campaign Promotional Guidelines

As competition for limited charitable dollars increases, United Way and community partners should use every possible opportunity to increase mutual visibility, promote the partnership and co-market with each other. Community partners are encouraged to support the annual campaign in our communities by accepting speaking engagements, conducting agency tours and participating in agency fairs as requested by the United Way, all in an attempt to mobilize the caring power of our community. During these engagements, they are asked to talk about their work, but not to request individual agency designated gifts. Because of the nature of the speaking engagements, it is also expected that they will promote undesignated gifts to the United Way of Western Connecticut, Inc.

In addition, community partners, especially those receiving funding are strongly encouraged to include the United Way logo on printed materials of funded programs and at the entrance to all facilities. Logos should appear on newsletters, brochures, annual reports, etc.

Partner United Way Campaign

While individual agency board and staff members concentrate their efforts on the services their agency provides, they should acknowledge the interdependence between the United Way, programs and communities and should understand the need to support the United Way. Therefore, community partners are strongly encouraged to conduct an internal United Way campaign among employees and should promote and support the campaign, including distributing pledge forms, among its board members.

Agency Fundraising and Donor Solicitations

UWWC, Inc.'s goal is to conduct a single, community-wide campaign that generates funds to support programs and to mobilize Western Connecticut to create lasting change in community conditions. It also recognizes the need for each community partner to seek funding from various sources, including community appeals and other events, throughout the year in order to remain fiscally sound. All supplemental fundraising must meet the highest ethical and generally accepted community standards. There are no "blackout" periods restricting supplemental fundraising during the United Way campaign. However, knowing that a community can quickly become saturated with funding appeals, it would benefit all community partners to be aware of other fundraising efforts when conducting broad-based appeals in our communities.

Community partners may not promote or seek designations to their agencies through UWWC, Inc. at any time during the year. Violations of these provisions will be examined on a case-by-case basis. Confirmed violations could result in a reduction of funding or termination of partnership.

V. Conclusion

As with policies of any evolving organization, the document is not intended to be the end of our work, but merely a step along the way toward making a deeper impact in our communities. We hope that this document will provide clarity to the community and our partners about our efforts in our communities and our relationships and expectations of our partners.

As our policies change as we continue to work toward positive change in our communities, we'll work to make sure our communities stayed informed. UWWC, Inc. believes it's important to communicate in an open, fair and reasonable manner. Agencies are welcome to share their viewpoints with UWWC, Inc. representatives and the UWWC, Inc. staff and council members are available to share the UWWC, Inc. viewpoint with

agency representatives. If you have any questions about our policies, please feel free to contact staff at our United Way offices:

Elizabeth Goehring, Executive Vice President, 203-792-5330

Alecia Andrews, Director of Community Building (Danbury), 203-792-5330

Jennifer Hallissey, Director of Community Impact (Stamford), 203-348-7711