



**United Way
of Buffalo & Erie County
Not For Profit
Resource Center**

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TO: Nonprofits and other interested parties
FROM: Joe Roccisano, Director of Agency Relations
SUBJECT: Program Investments Application Policy & Procedure
DATE: January 25, 2010

As a result of feedback from many of you, the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County board on January 21, 2010 adopted the following Program Investments Application Policy & Procedure. We hope you will find this document simple and straightforward. It supersedes all previous policies and procedures.

We will publish an application timetable and other information in the near future. In the meantime, you may wish to hold Friday, April 16 and/or Friday, April 30 on your calendars, for informational sessions.

I would be pleased to answer any questions at 887-2757.

Program Investments Application Policy & Procedure

Purpose:

The purpose of the Program Investments Application Policy & Procedure is to outline the program investments process.

Policy:

It is the policy of United Way of Buffalo & Erie County (UWBEC):

- That investments support the UWBEC platform of Education, Income and Health & Wellness, and the specific goals identified therein;
- That investments optimize the return on donor dollars by investing in the most appropriate programs resulting from an open, competitive, merit-based application process;
- That the application process provides adequate notice of investment decisions, and reasonable expectation of ongoing funding;
- That the application process treats all applicants similarly and gives constructive feedback to them.

Procedure:

1. In order to assure quality control, consistency and continuity, the Program Investments process will be driven by staff, with input from volunteers and specifically recruited subject matter experts.
2. Before the beginning of each investment cycle, staff will review the latest UWBEC platform goals.
3. Staff will develop criteria to measure how well applicants support the platform goals. Such criteria will be published as part of the application materials.
4. All nonprofit 501c3 health and human services agencies (which serve Erie County residents) may apply for program funding, subject to meeting general United Way requirements. In order to promote an open process, such requirements will be kept to only those requirements deemed essential. Requirements will be published as part of the application materials.
5. Agencies will be invited to attend informational sessions, at which UWBEC will review the application calendar and application materials. Such calendar and materials will be published in advance of the informational sessions. For consistency, those sessions will be recorded and made available promptly for agency viewing, through a website link.
6. Agencies may ask application process questions in writing. Such questions will be answered in writing. Questions and answers about the process will be posted on the website for all to view. Names of agencies will not be disclosed.
7. Staff may ask agencies questions about their specific applications in writing. Questions and answers regarding specific applications will not be available publicly. They will be available only to UWBEC and the applicant.
8. Agencies will receive adequate time to complete and submit applications. No late applications will be accepted.
9. The investment cycle is two years, with specific investment amounts contingent on the annual decision of the UWBEC board.
10. UWBEC will give applicants at least three months notice of funding decisions, and preferably six months notice.
11. When agencies are notified of investment decisions, UWBEC will provide feedback on each application, in a standardized, comparative format, which will highlight areas of possible future improvement.
12. After each investment cycle, UWBEC will hold "Lessons Learned" sessions with staff, volunteers, and agencies, to develop ideas to consider for the next investment cycle.
13. This policy and procedure will be published on the United Way website and included as part of the application materials.

Appendix: Application Timetable Guidelines:

The guidelines below are intended only as an approximation. Actual dates will be published with each investment cycle. The guidelines include only critical steps. There are many detailed steps not listed here.

Week #1 – Announce informational sessions

Week #3 – Post/distribute application

Week #5 – Hold informational sessions

Week #11 – Applications due from agencies

Week #23 – Last date to submit written questions to agencies

Week #27 – Last date for agencies to submit written responses to questions

Week #41 – Inform applicants of preliminary decisions