

**UNITED WAY OF BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY (UWBEC)  
2017-2019 INVESTMENT PROCESS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)**

**GENERAL QUESTIONS**

**What is a new program application?**

A new program application is a program not currently funded by the United Way (new to United Way investment funding) but still needs to have been in operation for at least 2 years.

**Does the program or the organization need to be two years old?**

UW seeks established programs that have been operating for at least two years and have program performance data available. As such, programs must have operated since April 1, 2014 to be considered eligible for funding.

**Can you help me determine which programs to apply for, in which platforms, in which programs of interest, using which performance measures?**

While we always aim to be helpful when we can, we regret that due to the competitive nature of this process we are unable to provide individual advice or coaching.

**Do currently funded programs receive an advantage in the application process?**

While we appreciate our partnership with currently funded programs, they do not receive an advantage in the competitive application process.

**Can previous applicants get access to their previous scores?**

Yes, as part of our debriefing process, UW provides each applicant with a letter which includes the program score(s). Please contact UW staff if you would like a copy of your score.

**Is there a funding cap?**

There is no funding cap but there is a minimum application request of \$20,000. Most applicants request between 15-25% of their total program budget.

**Is the \$20,000 minimum request over one year or two year period?**

Please indicate the amount of funding requested from UW on an annual (one-year) basis.

**What funds will be allocated by United Way to specific platforms and programs of interest (priority vs. non-priority areas)?**

While we do not determine this in advance, you may view our currently funded programs on our website ([www.uwbec.org](http://www.uwbec.org)). The investment process is highly competitive and we will not be able to fund all worthwhile applications nor can the organization guarantee equal funding distribution across its three platforms or priority/focus areas. Funding decisions will be based on the evaluation criteria established with heavy emphasis on documented program performance and the ability to assist UWBEC in achieving results in addressing identified community conditions.

**As an organization, does each program stand on its own?**

Yes, scored program applications are compared with similar programs within a particular platform focus area.

**Can you clarify the difference between program and organization?**

For the UW investment process, we are asking applicants to provide the name of the program for which you are requesting funds. Please remember that if you have used a different name for the program in past UW investment processes to include this information in parenthesis. The organization or agency is the 501(c)(3) nonprofit (not-for-profit) entity that oversees the health and human service programming.

**Are successful innovators or need based the most likely to succeed in the process?**

UW funds established programs that have been operating at least two years, have program performance data available, and provides research that supports evidenced-based/best/promising practice models. UW does not fund pilot, demonstration, or start-up programs through the investment process.

**Can you describe the review process and how you identify investment volunteers?**

The evaluation process is led by UW staff, with technical assistance provided by local academics, retired individuals proficient in health and human services, and community leaders with evidence of subject matter expertise. Each review team is comprised of at least four reviewers who are responsible for examining between 4-6 applications by program of interest areas. Applications are scored out of a total of 150 points. Each volunteer reviewer submits scores are then submitted via web-based form and calculations are computed. A report is then developed with scores ranked from highest to lowest in each program of interest type/platform area and then funding discussions take place.

Investment volunteers are recruited through open solicitation through UW's Volunteer Center, Volunteer WNY ([www.volunteerwny.org](http://www.volunteerwny.org)), identification through United Way staff, and special outreach to subject matter experts. As UWBECC is a community-based, fundraising organization, local investors and donors also have a role in evaluating applications. All volunteers receive training on UW priority areas, community needs, social service programming, and the scoring process.

**We are considering submitting a proposal that fits well under two platforms-how should we apply?**

Keep in mind new applications will only be accepted in those UWBECC identified priority areas. Applicants have a few options on how they could apply:

1. They can identify the core focus of the program and submit in that area. Applicants will want to discuss other services offered under Program Design.
2. They can go with the area that has the strongest performance measures (and, again, discuss the other services offered under Program Design).
3. They can submit two applications for the same program (one in each Platform/priority area).

**What if you have two programs that fit under the same UWBECC-identified priority, same program type, and same performance data? Will these programs be "competing" against each other?**

Yes, they will be evaluated by the same set of reviewers and will essentially "compete" against each other. In such instances, we strongly recommend that applicants consider combining the programs if appropriate. We believe that this may actually strengthen the program in some cases-especially related to performance measurement.

**Can an agency submit two applications under one platform if they are for different age ranges? If they can, will they be competing against each other or will they be competing only against the other applications in that specific age range?**

Yes, an agency may submit more than one application. Keep in mind that new applications will only be accepted in those UWBECE identified priority areas. Applications will "compete" against each other if they are in the same platform, for the same result statement, and the same programming type. In these instances, we recommend that the organization consider submitting one combined application.

**Can you choose or reference multiple programs in one application?**

You need to choose one program for the application but you can reference multiple programs in the narrative.

### **ON-LINE APPLICATION**

**Once an individual receives their welcome email from the UW online system, how do they get a username and password set up?**

Login information was created from the on-line application contact forms due on May 6, 2016. Once applicants receive their Welcome email, click on the link provided and it will bring you to the login page. Your username is your email address and you may need to select "forgot password" which will send you another email with a temporary password.

**If applying for 3 different areas/programs, what do you do about the contacts?**

If possible, we would like one contact person per program application. However, we are aware that one individual may write all of the applications for the agency.

**Can 2 people be the contact on a program application?**

We prefer one person per program application.

**Can all applications be connected to one person or have more than one person access to application online?**

It will not be a problem to have different permission levels. We can allow Executive Directors to see all applications for an organization while the individuals creating applications will only see applications that they have created.

**Will there be a dashboard where I can pick the application I want to work on?**

Yes, you will be able to view all of the applications that you have opened on the Funding Application Review tab/page.

**When is the application submitted as opposed to saved?**

You will need to hit the save button after each page/tab before moving on to another section. The system will give you a message that you have successfully saved your work. As long as you continue to save your work, you will be able to edit/add to the application. The current session timeout is set to 4 hours, but as long as the Save button is clicked before inactivity this should not be a concern, the user can always log back in and start again where they left off.

Once you have completed the application, you will go to the Funding Application Review tab/page and select the application you wish to submit. Once you submit the application you will no longer be able to edit/change the application. You will also receive an email confirmation that the application has been submitted.

**Do you need to print your application before you submit it?**

You do not have to print before you submit, however may be helpful to do so. On the Funding Application Review tab/page, you can print out what you have entered so far or once you complete/submit the application you can print it (PDF format).

**Is there a printer friendly version of the online application? If so, does it include character limits?**

There are 2 print functions on the Funding Application Review tab/page. You can print out what you have entered so far or once you are completed and submit the application you can print it (PDF format). Character limits/counts (paragraphs and spaces do count) are visible and included after each narrative/text box. Unfortunately, you will not have the capability of bolding/highlighting in the narrative sections/boxes.

**Do we have access to the on-line application after it has been submitted and for how long?**

The due date for all applications is June 6, 2016. Once you have submitted your application(s), it is saved to our system and you will have access to view and/or print the application.

**UWBEC-IDENTIFIED PRIORITY PROGRAM AREAS (PLATFORM SPECIFIC)**

**Programs of Interest – Can you only choose one?**

Please select one program of interest type for which you are requesting funds. Be sure to select a program type within the same platform area as your UWBEC-Identified Result. New applications will only be accepted in the UWBEC identified priority areas.

**Can you provide clarification as to what you are looking for in the UWBEC-Identified Priority Program Areas (9 points)? Are the nine points only available in the priority program areas?**

In this section, applicants who apply/select one of the UWBEC identified priority program areas will be eligible to receive up to nine points. The points are based on the strength and alignment of the priority area described in the narrative sections of your program application. Yes, up to nine points is available in the UWBEC identified priority program areas.

**Should currently funded programs expand their existing programs to include the younger population or should they now submit 2 applications?**

You can submit several applications but keep in mind that we prefer comprehensive programs.

**When you refer to young children, what does this mean?**

UW identifies young children as birth to eight years old.

**Is prevention and early intervention across all platform areas?**

Yes, prevention and early intervention services are a priority across all three platform areas. In addition, programs providing services that focus on early childhood and young children (birth to 8 years old) will be prioritized for consideration.

## **EDUCATION**

### **Can you please define what is meant by # children receiving parent support programs?**

For the performance measure- # of children receiving parent support programs, we define this as programs for children and also involve the parent(s)/ how you plan to infuse parenting development into that process/particular parent support program. You can also view the Informational Session video posted on our website under the Services for Nonprofits tab and select Funding/Donations. We discuss this question at the 32:22 mark of the video.

### **Are there any models on family engagement?**

Yes, we provided some examples and links during the RFP sessions.

## **HEALTH & WELLNESS**

### **Health – Are there other determinants we can use besides healthy foods, safe housing and transportation?**

If you go to the CDC website- <http://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/data/index.htm>- social determinants of health, you will see a list of other items you can select.

### **Health & Wellness – Healthy Choices – Can the program be expanded beyond age 8?**

Birth to 8 is our priority focus area. If you are a new program to UW, you can only apply in a UWBECE identified priority area.

## **FINANCIAL STABILITY**

### **Under Financial Education & Asset Building, would foreclosure prevention be considered a priority program to maintain assets?**

Programs that help families with young children secure and/or maintain assets including a home, vehicle, or microbusiness/small business is considered one of the UW identified priority areas. Points in this section are awarded based on the strength and alignment of the priority area described in the narrative sections of your program application. In addition, UW strongly recommends that applicants select performance measures for which they have the strongest supporting data.

## **POPULATION SERVED**

No questions

## PROGRAM DESIGN

### **How does UWPEC define a “new” program versus an expansion of efforts?**

A program is considered “new” if it employs a new curriculum, staffing model, or provides different services than previously provided. Such a program is untested and is therefore ineligible for UWPEC funds. However, if a program remains the same in terms of curriculum, staffing model, and services and simply being expanded to accommodate more participants, then it is considered an expansion of effort and may apply.

### **"What do you mean by "new curriculum"? "By "new curriculum" do you mean we cannot stay current in our fields and improve upon the current curriculum (sometimes even required by regulation) that we use for our existing programs?"**

UWPEC defines “new curriculum” as being completely new to the organization/program and untested. UWPEC recognizes that applicants need to stay current on developments in their field/programming. UWPEC also understands that programs may also be required by government regulations to use new curricula. As such, UWPEC would consider staying current in the field/programming and using curricula required by regulation an improvement to current/existing curriculum. UWPEC recommends applicants provide information about the nature of the program and the rigor of the science behind the evidenced-based practice. Please do not assume that the reviewer understands the science behind this practice just because it is titled, “evidenced-based.”

### **Would a currently funded program in a priority area (using a different intervention but still measuring the same outcomes) be considered a new program?**

No, UW would consider staying current in the field/programming and using curricula/interventions required by regulation an improvement to current or existing efforts. UWPEC recommends applicants provide information about the nature of the program/intervention and the rigor of the science behind the evidenced-based practice.

### **If a program is proven in other areas, but has not been done in Buffalo before could we apply for the program then or does it need to be done here by our organization first?**

UWPEC does not fund new programming or demonstration projects. A program must have operated for 24 consecutive months in order to be eligible for UWPEC funding. As such, programming must have begun by April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014. A program is considered “new” if it employs a new curriculum, staffing model, or provides different services than have been previously been provided. Such a program is untested and is therefore ineligible for funds. However, if a program remains the same in terms of curriculum, staffing model, and services and is simply being expanded to accommodate more participants, then it is considered an expansion of effort and may apply.

### **If we want to ask for “an expansion of efforts” which section on the application would we include this information? For example, we want to expand the number of participants in the groups that we are currently providing.**

As long as you are not changing your staffing model, curriculum or activities, you have two options: (1) Request additional funds for your current program for increased activity or (2) Submit a separate application for the expansion effort. In the first instance, you would apply for the amount of money needed to increase your program staffing or, for option 2, submit a separate application for the expansion effort. Remember you will need to justify your request to the reviewers and provide performance measurement data that supports it. If you do submit a second application, you do run the risk of competing against yourself.

**Regarding the April 1, 2014 minimum start date for programs, does that have to be a full year programming or could it be seasonal (e.g. summer program)?**

In the RFP, UW prefers established programs that have been operating for two years and can provide program performance data (3 years). Full year vs. seasonal programming- would depend on your program design and how often the program is delivered.

**PROGRAM STAFFING**

**Can you explain why (page 16 of the RFP, question 8c.) program staff longevity does not include a point value?**

Applicants will need to list the number of years for each program staff member employed by the organization but will not be scored.

**PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT**

**When reporting data on performance measures, what years are UW looking for? Should we follow the UWBECE fiscal year or the calendar year?**

We recognize that reporting guidelines are variable for different funding bodies. When responding to the UWBECE RFP, please report performance measures in a way that makes them as easily understandable as possible. We allow a degree of flexibility due to the diversity of existing reporting structures. For example, it could be the calendar year/grant cycle or in the Education platform it could be the school year.

**How many performance measures should we select?**

Applicants are asked to select 1-3 performance measures related to the UWBECE-identified result statement they selected. When possible, applicants are strongly encouraged to select performance measures that demonstrate the highest level of change possible (i.e., measures that demonstrate change in status, condition, or behavior are preferred over knowledge-and/or skill-based outcomes or output measures).

**Do we need to use the performance measures provided in the RFP?**

Yes. UWBECE is also accountable to its funders and must demonstrate performance on its Identified Results Statements. By having a set of common performance measures, UWBECE is able to report its results in a more robust manner – making it possible to secure additional funds.

**Can we select a performance measure from a program of interest that doesn't correspond with that particular Program of Interest in the RFP?**

You will need to select the performance measures that correspond to the particular program of interest type.

**What if you select performance measures but do not have the data to back them up?**

UWBECE strongly recommends that applicants select performance measures for which they have the strongest supporting data. In cases where your program is not currently capturing data on UWBECE-Identified performance measures, please indicate this and provide an explanation as to why you are not collecting this information at this time. You will also want to describe your plan for collecting UWBECE-

Identified performance measure data in the future. If you are collecting data on a similar measure, you may wish to include this information in your application and describe how you will modify your current data collection to match the performance measures established by UWBECE.

**If we have been collecting data in another way, should we list it? We are enhancing measures but do have other data, show we explain?**

Yes, please describe the data that you do have available at the present time as well as your plans to modify data collection to coincide with the performance measures identified by UWBECE.

**In reporting past year's data, it may be different if the measures have changed. Should we discuss this?**

Yes, any variability in program performance data can and should be explained to the best of your ability.

**If there is non-UWBECE performance measures included in our application, where in the application should these be included?**

If possible, please incorporate these into the narratives within the Program Design and/or Performance Measurement sections.

**We track outcomes but don't accumulate them. Can we still apply?**

Yes, however we would encourage you to go back to case files to try to reconstruct quantitative data. Otherwise the application might not be competitive given the point values.

### **PROGRAM BUDGET**

**Is there any place in the budget to show subcontractors and other partner agencies?**

Yes, in the program budget section there are two lines listed as "Other" that you can include subcontractors/other partner agencies.

**Describe the types of participant incentives that are allowable in the Program Budget? Please provide a range that is considered reasonable?**

Applicants are allowed to provide program participants with small incentives to encourage their participation or commemorate a particular achievement. Past applicants have provided \$5-\$10 gift cards, socks, books, bus tokens, and small toys by way of example. UWBECE does not have a specific range for what is considered reasonable for these items. Applicants are asked to request what they feel they need for their particular program participants. Reviewers will examine the "reasonableness" of the overall program budget.

**Where do we include mileage?**

Please include mileage reimbursement in local travel.

**What do you mean by professional fees?**

This can include membership fees paid by the organization to maintain membership in professional organizations or to attend professional trainings.

**Do we have to list other funding sources individually?**

No, applicants do not need to list other funding sources individually. Applicants can group by funding type or they can provide more detail as they see fit.

**Where would you prefer AmeriCorps members to be listed?**

Applicants may list these individuals as full-time employees. Paid interns should be treated the same way.

**Where does professional development go? Is it professional fees?**

Applicants can include as "Other". Professional fees are for memberships to professional organizations.

**Is rent/occupancy an allowable expense?**

Yes, there is a specific line for occupancy/utilities under Program Non-Personnel section of the budget chart.

**If we have used volunteers to teach sessions within our program and we now would like to hire a staff member to provide this, would this be an allowable expense?**

Yes, you can include staff in the Budget section of your UWBECE requested funds.

**FUNDED PROGRAM RECOGNITION AND PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**

**United Way Involvement – Is this what we already have done or what we plan to do?**

For currently funded programs, it is what you already have done. For new applicants, it is what you plan to do. This area is not scored but will play a factor in determining selection and funding levels for applications scored.

**Updated on: May 20, 2016**