

Attachment 2b

Initial response of United Way of Snohomish County



United Way
of Snohomish County

Introduction

United Way of Snohomish County is the leading community impact organization serving Snohomish County for more than 65 years. Throughout our history we have built enduring relationships with local business, organizations and individuals to give our county a strong health and human services foundation. Over the decades we have grown to a 10 million dollar per year organization whose core mission is to lead community change to improve the lives of people in our community. We are a trusted community partner, who meets the highest of standards of excellence for non-profit management.

Our evolution to a community impact organization was founded on a sound strategic plan developed by our Board of Directors. As a result of this 18 month process, we have moved beyond simply funding client-based services that meet immediate needs and now focus on root causes to resolve systemic problems. Working with community leaders and volunteers, we identified three community outcomes that define our priorities for Kids, Families and the Community as a whole.

United Way has established three volunteer councils to oversee the work toward these outcomes: the Kids Matter Vision Council, the Families Matter Vision Council and the Community Matters Vision Council. Vision Council members represent the diversity and geography of Snohomish County and, with the support of United Way staff, accomplish their work through a wide variety of activities: study and assessment of community conditions and issues, strategic planning, resource development, grant investment and accountability, community initiatives, focused projects, public policy, and measuring results. We have 90 community volunteers involved on vision councils. Oversight of this work is provided by the Vision Council Coordinating Committee and the United Way Board of Directors.

Kids Matter

Volunteers who serve on the Kids Matter Vision Council are identifying and prioritizing strategies to create a community where all infants, children and youth are nurtured and provided with the opportunity to succeed in school, develop life skills and reach their full potential.

We are a young and vital county, with 26 percent of our population under the age of 18. Our children's success is critical to our future. Statewide, teachers report that 43 percent of children entering school are not adequately prepared socially and emotionally, the area they ranked most critical for readiness to learn. The good news is that we know investing in quality childcare and early education pays off with success in school, higher graduation rates, workforce readiness, and greater job productivity.

United Way annually invests \$2 million dollars in programs for youth development, early childhood education and childcare, parent education and support, foster care, and substance abuse and prevention. But our work doesn't stop there. We are educating lawmakers to help shape public policy and promoting early learning through initiatives such as United Way's Success By 6™.

Success By 6™ works with school districts, childcare providers and parents to assess children ages 2-5 and develop individual plans to prepare them to be ready to think, read and get along with others so that they can start school ready to succeed. This year, Success By 6™ will double the number of young children it serves at 40 sites and eight school districts in our county to help build strong foundations for our children's future.

Families Matter

Volunteers who serve on the Families Matter Vision Council are working to create a community where all individuals and families have access to the basic needs of food, shelter, health care and the opportunity to live self-sufficiently. Lack of affordable housing, access to health-care, and food insecurity continue to be issues of concern to this council.

Each year, United Way invests \$2 million dollars in emergency services, housing, mental health services, disaster relief, and food, clothing, transportation and health care services.

The county's largest food drive, sponsored in part by United Way, each year gathers 400,000 pounds of food for 19 food banks.

Our efforts in public advocacy contributed to the passage of two key pieces of legislation that will increase the availability of affordable housing and expand Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) to help working, low-income families save to buy a home, start a business or get an education.

Community Matters

Volunteers who serve on the Community Matters Vision Council are working to improve the ways people get community support, connect with one another, and get involved.

This is a community that cares. An incredible 45 percent of adults in Snohomish County volunteer, giving an average of 199 hours per year. United Way's Volunteer Center matches volunteers county-wide with opportunities to get involved. Our annual Day of Caring alone engages more than 1,000 volunteers in the largest, single-day volunteer event in Snohomish County.

United Way also invests \$1 million dollars each year in services that provide access to community resources, strengthen social connections, promote diversity and enhance safety, victim support and crime reduction.

Now, thanks to United Way and its partners, people will get connected more easily—both to receive help and to offer it--by calling the 2-1-1 telephone line to reach trained information and referral specialists.

United Way Leadership Developing 2-1-1 in Washington

United Way of Snohomish County was the instrumental leader in developing the 2-1-1 system in Washington State.

2-1-1 is a simple, easy-to-remember telephone number that offers a "front door" to health and human services resource information, whether someone is looking for help or offering to give help. Simply dial "2-1-1" from a land-based phone to connect and get answers (cell phones and pay phones will come on-line later this year).

United Way of Snohomish County's Executive Vice-President, Dennis Smith, serves as the Board Chair for the Washington Information Network or WIN 2-1-1. Through his and United Way of Snohomish County's leadership, our state launched 2-1-1 service on February 22, 2006. 2-1-1 connects residents to trained Information and Referral Specialists who will answer calls using a comprehensive database of health, welfare and recreational resources with information on needs like:

- Rent and mortgage assistance
- Counseling and support groups
- Food and clothing
- Donations
- Transportation
- Emergency shelter
- Volunteering

2-1-1 benefits the Puget Sound region and areas in the state with:

- Increased efficiency. A one-stop location for information and referrals for people seeking information about a variety of community services.
- Decreased costs. Previously, agencies made referrals and attempted to maintain databases on an individual basis; this creates duplication of work. With a central clearinghouse of information about available services, all agencies will see reductions in staff time dedicated to locating resources.
- A planning tool. 2-1-1 will track requests, thereby allowing communities to identify and address major gaps in services.
- Disaster preparedness. Learn how to access services after a natural or non-natural disaster as well as how to volunteer to assist, or contribute.

At the present time, 2-1-1 is in place Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. in most parts of the state. Washington became the 36th state to offer a 2-1-1 system to its residents. United Way of Snohomish County has been recognized by city, county, state and federal officials (including two U.S. Congressional Representatives) as having been the leader of this initiative in Snohomish County and across the state.

United Way's Grant Management Expertise

Throughout its history, United Way has invested community dollars in the form of grants to local human services organizations. Our current grant structure includes Multi-year Program Grants, Outreach Grants, Opportunity Grants and Strategic Alliance grants.

Each of these grants has defined eligibility requirements, clear criteria and priorities as well as processes and procedures to support the allocation and distribution of dollars.

For the purpose of this proposal and as one example of our expertise and experience as a grants administrator, I would like to focus on United Way's multi-year program grants. We currently have allocated and are monitoring grants to 114 programs from 49 human service organizations. The investment in these grants is in excess of four million dollars.

To receive these funds, applicants are required to respond to a formal Request for Proposals (RFP). These grants are available to non-profit health and human service organizations in Snohomish County and agencies must pre-qualify by meeting minimum standards of eligibility.

- Applicants shall have been in existence as a tax exempt 501 C 3 non-profit organizations for a minimum of two years. The agency must be incorporated under the laws of the State of Washington and registered under the Washington State Charitable Solicitation Act.
- Applicants must be fiscally and administratively sound. Agencies must provide a current audit upon application; should the applicant receive funding, yearly audits must be submitted through-out the life of the grant. Audits are reviewed by United Way's audit committee. In addition, detailed program budgets are required as part of the proposal content.
- Applicants must meet the criteria under United Way's non-discrimination policy. Agencies selected as grantees must also commit to United Way's *Community Building Partnership Agreement* which states the tenets of their relationship with United Way.
- Alignment with United Way's community impact agenda is a necessary requirement to receive this funding. To assure that this investment aligns with our community outcomes, applicants select program level outcomes from a researched based outcome menu developed by United Way impact and investment staff.
- In addition, the programs selected for funding must demonstrate sound outcome measurement performance throughout the life of the 3-year grant cycle. Each program is required to track and measure two outcomes for each program that receives funding. Progress towards these outcomes is determined through reports submitted at yearly intervals.

The process of allocating the multi-year program grants is comprehensive. Applications are submitted directly to United Way's three Vision Councils. Volunteers on these councils individually read and rate proposals using defined rating criteria. A group deliberation session follows this reading and rating period where volunteers determine questions to be asked at face-to-face meetings with applicants. Once those meetings are held, volunteers gather again for multiple deliberation sessions until they reach consensus on the programs they will recommend for funding.

Once the initial funding recommendations are determined, they are submitted to the Vision Council Coordinating Committee (VCCC) for review. The VCCC is comprised of the Chairs and Vice-chairs of each of the Vision Councils, members of United Way's Board of Directors and United Way staff. The VCCC reviews the funding recommendations, discusses the rationale for the funding choices and submits final

recommendations for review to the full United Way Board of Directors. The Board of Directors gives final approval for these grants.

United Way staff provides support for the process by creating the RFP and reporting documents, developing clear allocation procedures and guidelines, providing training in outcome measurement evaluation to both volunteers and applicants, as well as educating volunteers about community conditions. Staff do not influence or make funding decisions.

Several staff provide support for our grant management activities. Three impact and investment managers, one for each council, work on this process under the leadership of Barbara Davis, V.P. of Impact and Community Investment. These staff have expertise in grant-making procedures, outcome measurement evaluation, volunteer management, group-process, and community assessment.

United Way's General Approach to Managing the Public Purpose Fund

Should United Way to be selected to manage this fund, we envision using a similar approach for investment as described above. Our Vision Council model provides an excellent example of a volunteer lead process that is supported by staff with expertise in outcome measurement evaluation and grant-making. As with our other grants, we would design a process for determining eligibility and connection to the defined funding criteria, conduct a fair and objective allocation process and monitor grantees to insure achievement of funding goals. Since this is a state-wide fund, we will communicate with all United Ways in the state to secure request for proposals that best meet the goals and criteria as established by the grantor.

Additional Staff Resources

- A President with 25 years of United Way experience. Previously V.P. and Mid-America Regional Director for United Way of America; Chair of the Washington State United Way Association Board; member of United Way of America's "National Professional Council" a select group of 50 United Way leaders advising the CEO of United Way of America.
- Five finance staff, including one CPA.
- Four marketing staff, including a V.P., graphic artist, and a special events manager. We design most of our materials. We also maintain a high-quality website www.uwsc.org.
- An Executive V.P. (PhD) with more than 25 years non-profit experience, specializing in community-building and the development of 2-1-1. This staff also coordinates our public policy efforts, including work in Olympia and Washington D.C.
- Five resource development staff.

Conflict of Interest Policy

United Way of Snohomish County has a strong policy regarding conflicts of interest. Given that our Board of Directors (25 members) and three Vision Councils (90 members) contain both a representative group of area residents and strong corporate and

community leaders, it is inevitable that there will be instances when conflicts arise. In particular, any time a United Way volunteer or staff member has a conflict, he/she must abstain from participation and voting on any matter related to the conflict. At this time, there is one Verizon representative on our Board of Directors, John Gustafson. John is also our immediate past Board Chair. Our conflict policy, which John knows and supports, would call for him to be removed from discussion and granting decisions regarding this fund.

United Way of Snohomish County Procedures and Administrative Charges

United Way of Snohomish County prefers to be the holder of the grantor funds for disbursement under the guidelines of this program. We generally charge between two and five percent to administer grant programs like this, but request the opportunity to provide a more exact quote once we learn more about the magnitude of this project. As the President of United Way of Snohomish County, I would need to carefully analyze the scope of the project to fully understand the requested commitment and work required in order to dedicate the staff, volunteer and financial resources needed to provide quality service to the grantor, grantee organizations, and the people of Washington.