United Way of Southwestern Indiana
August 2022 Request for Proposals
Thriving Next Gen: School Engagement

United Way of Southwestern Indiana requests proposals to support the school engagement of children and youth in Vanderburgh, Warrick, and/or Spencer counties.

Grant Purpose Statement

United Way of Southwestern Indiana (UWSWI) is dedicated to increasing economic Upward Mobility for residents of Spencer, Vanderburgh, and Warrick counties. We invest in best-in-class nonprofit programs; we provide direct services to low-income individuals and families; we facilitate dialogue across sectors; we advocate for equitable public policy. All of our efforts are driven by a desire to see our neighbors reach economic self-sufficiency and our community’s children break cycles of generational poverty.

Poverty is a complex issue with many influences. To address the multidimensional nature of poverty, UWSWI prioritizes the following Pathways towards Upward Mobility:

- Empowering Employment
- Mental Health
- Thriving Next Gen
- Social Stability & Growth

The current Request for Proposals (RFP) is aligned with UWSWI’s Thriving Next Gen Pathway. United Way’s Pathway strategy for Community Impact is grounded in the landmark research of Harvard Economist, Raj Chetty. One of the most robust findings of this research suggests that communities which have strong public schools are the more likely to see their children break cycles of generational poverty. The direction is clear. To shift the odds for low-income children, United Way, and the entire community, must examine how we can best support our schools.

Through consultation with local school districts and volunteers with professional expertise in education, United Way has selected school engagement as the outcome focus of our first Thriving Next Gen Pathway grant. Research defines school engagement as,

“...how students are cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally engaged in their learning, including cognitive interest in the work, behaviors such as attending class prepared, and emotional attachment to school and teachers.” – Moore, et. al, 2015, Child Trends Research Institute
As UWSWI promotes our vision for economic Upward Mobility in our region, we must recognize that the link between traditional academic success in childhood and prospects for economic success in adulthood is commonly understood in our culture. Previous generations held narrow views on intelligence and children’s innate abilities to achieve academically. However, modern research on child development indicates that myriad factors impact children’s performance in school. In particular, a child’s school engagement is predictive of his or her achievement.

“School engagement is critical for improving the academic outcomes of students. This engagement is linked to higher academic achievement as measured by both school grades and scores on standardized tests.” – Lippman & Rivers, 2008, The California Association of School Psychologists

Insights on how and why children reach their academic potential inspire hopefulness for our community’s future. Unfortunately, this deeper understanding of what children need to be successful has resulted in ever-increasing demands on our schools. Gone are the days in which schools’ chief concerns were “reading, writing, and arithmetic.” Administrators and teachers are spread thin as they evaluate and support every dimension of their students’ development. As such, it is incumbent upon other community members, including nonprofit organizations and funders, to stand by our public schools and assist them in their educational mission.

Through the Thriving Next Gen Pathway Grant, UWSWI seeks to invest in nonprofit programs that work collaboratively with schools to foster strong school engagement in students. Grantees will be awarded both financial support and evaluation services.

**Grant Details**

The total award amount for the current grant is up to $475,000. Request exceeding this amount will not be considered. The minimum request amount is $50,000.

In addition to financial support, all grantees will be provided with evaluation consultation and support by Diehl Consulting Group. UWSWI will cover all costs associated with this service. Participation in evaluation is required for grantee organizations, although individual program participants may decline to participate in data collection. Evaluation participation includes but is not limited to: (a) administering data collection instruments, (b) obtaining participant evaluation consent, and (c) helping to inform the grantee’s local evaluation plan.

Results will be reported to UWSWI. Results will be used to inform program improvement and the overall outcomes reported to UWSWI. Failure to participate in program evaluation may result in discontinuation of funding and/or a requirement that expended funding be reimbursed to UWSWI.

Grant funding must be used to support program services during the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school year. Quarterly funding disbursals will begin in early 2023 to aid in program planning and ramp-up activities. (See grant timeline for details)

**Eligibility Requirements:**

Applicants must be either:
- a 501(c) 3 organization as registered with the IRS
- or a community group with a 501(c)3 organization serving as its fiscal agent/sponsor

Proposed projects must provide services in Spencer, Vanderburgh and/or Warrick counties. Funds awarded by UWSWI are restricted for use in Spencer, Vanderburgh and/or Warrick counties.

 Applicant organizations must have strong organizational leadership supportive of community impact principles. Applicant organizations must have internal capacity to manage fiscal and performance expectations.

**Grant Scope & Priority**

*School Partnerships:* Funding is intended to support nonprofit programs that work in direct collaboration with public school partners. Documentation of at least one formal school partnership will be required. Although services do not need to be performed on school premises, active school partnerships are mandatory. Proposals for new pilot programs must have school partnerships committed prior to their grant application submission. Nonprofit programs servicing exclusively private schools will be considered out of scope.

*Program Timing:* Funding is intended to support programming that coincides with the school year. Summer camps or other programs that take place exclusive during school breaks will not be considered.

*Student Populations:* Funding is intended to serve students in grades K-12. Preschool programs and college/university programs are considered out of scope. Programs serving adult learners or GED programs are considered out of scope.

*Priority Age Groups:* Programs serving any age range of K-12 students are eligible to apply. Priority points will be given to programs targeting students in middle school and/or high school.

*Priority Service Timeline:* Programs serving individual students continuously over multiple years will be given priority over programs which engage students more briefly.

*Priority for Low Income Student:* Service to low-income people is foundational in all UWSWI funding. While it is not required that programs serve exclusively low-income children and youth, applicants must demonstrate that either a significant majority of participants are low-income or provide a plan demonstrating how funding will be used to support low-income youth within the program’s participant base.

**Grant Timeline**

The Thriving Next Gen Pathway Grant application will open in UWSWI’s online grant portal on **August 4, 2022.** UWSWI will host an informational session regarding the grant opportunity. Interested applicants are strongly encouraged to attend. The deadline for application submission is **September 12, 2022.**

UWSWI’s internal grant proposal review process will take place from mid-September through mid-November. Final funding awards will be approved by the UWSWI Board of Directors in their November meeting. Applicants will be notified of their funding decision by early December, and formal grant contracts will be executed by the end of the calendar year.
Below is an outline of the grant term. Quarterly award disbursements will be early in 2023. This is intended to aid in planning, hiring, and other logistical preparations. Grantees will also meet with Diehl Consulting Group in the first half of 2023 to create their customized evaluation and data collection plans. These plans must be finalized before program activities in the 2023-24 school year commence. Please note that the final grant payment will be disbursed mid-academic year in the second year of the grant. Despite the timing of payments, grantees’ second evaluation report will reflect program services that take place throughout the entire 2024-25 academic year.

Please note that the exact time of evaluation reports may vary based on the timing of evaluation activities. Evaluation reports are intended to reflect the services provided throughout a full academic year. Reports will be released in the summer or early fall immediately following the academic year under evaluation.

### UWSWI Thriving Next Gen Grant Term Outline

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Program & Evaluation Planning Phase

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School year programing ongoing

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School year programing ongoing