



United Way of
Southwestern Indiana

United Way of Southwestern Indiana Spring 2023 Request for Proposals Social Stability & Growth

United Way of Southwestern Indiana requests proposals to support the social stability and growth of low-income individuals and families 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; and we advocate for equitable public policy. All 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
Thriving Next Gen

Mental Health
Social Stability & Growth

The current Request for Proposals (RFP) is aligned with UWSWI's Social Stability & Growth Pathway.

United Way's *Pathways to Potential* strategy for community impact is grounded in the landmark research of Harvard Economist Raj Chetty. Like many researchers interested in poverty, Chetty's work has examined a concept known as bridging social capital. Bridging social capital is defined as:

"connections that link people across a cleavage that typically divides society (such as race, or class, or religion). It is associations that 'bridge' between communities, groups, or organizations." – Claridge, 2018, Social Capital Research & Training

Chetty's expansive research has highlighted an important insight on poverty and economic upward mobility. Communities with higher rates of bridging social capital also have higher rates of economic upward mobility. In research examining cities, towns, and even neighborhoods, the same trend emerges. Communities which are highly segregated by economic class tend to have deeply entrenched poverty. In these places, if you were born poor, you will likely die poor – and your children will bear poverty's legacy, continuing the cycle. This paints a grim picture, but hope lies in the realization that the

opposite is also true. Communities where people intermix and build relationships across class lines afford greater opportunity for poor people to rise up out of poverty.

Research demonstrates the folk wisdom holds true: it's not what you know, but *who* you know! To this end, United Way asks, "How can we make Southwestern Indiana rich with bridging social capital? Where will these cross-class relationships be forged and who will facilitate them?"

Civic groups, recreational programs, and faith communities are our greatest assets in building bridging social capital. United Way plays the vital role of uniting our community's resources, and we are ready to invest in initiatives that build social networks to bridge poor people with the mentors and friends who will walk beside them as they strive for financial stability and a better life for their children.

While bridging social capital may be the best way to help poor people get ahead, we must acknowledge many poor people are simply trying to get by. Family members, neighbors, and other close-knit relationships in a poor person's immediate circle can provide a stabilizing effect in rocky times. United Way sees the value of this type of bonding social capital, and we seek to support nonprofit services that address their clients' stability as a first step. By first creating a reliable foundation, social bridges can stand strong.

Grant Details

The Social Stability & Growth Pathway Grant application will open via UWSWI's grant portal in Spring of 2023. An information session for interested applicants will be hosted at the time of the grant's launch. Grant awards will be announced mid-year. Exact dates and deadlines will be released in the coming weeks.

The minimum request is \$50,000.

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

- 1) The intention of this funding is to serve adult individuals and/or families. Priority consideration will be given to programs with a multi-generation service model – offering supports for both parents and their children.

- 2) Service to individuals and families across the spectrum of poverty is essential to our community. However, services to people living in severe and active crisis must prioritize their clients' basic needs before the client will likely be ready to engage in significant bridging social capital efforts. Bearing this in mind, the Social Stability & Growth Pathway Grant will give priority consideration to programs serving the ALICE population (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) or those who have stability in their basic needs and are pursuing financial self-sufficiency.
- 3) Best practices indicate program participants who are empowered to make choices about their service have stronger outcomes than program participants who are not granted this autonomy. One example of this might be allowing a program participant to select the person who will serve as their mentor or case manager. The Social Stability & Growth Grant will give priority to programs which demonstrate efforts to empower their clients through choice.
- 4) Poverty and the challenges of upward mobility exist broadly throughout our nation and our local community. However, data tells us that some subpopulations are more likely to experience poverty than the general population. Women, people of color, and single parents are just a few examples of groups who experience disproportionately high rates of poverty. The Social Stability & Growth Grant will prioritize programs which demonstrate a strong rationale for how they target specific groups for their service.