

United Way of Southwestern Indiana
Request for Proposals
Mental Health Pathway
March 2024



United Way of Southwestern Indiana requests proposals to improve access to behavioral health supportive services and behavioral health awareness and skill-building opportunities for low-income people in Spencer, Vanderburgh and/or Warrick Counties.

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 non-profit 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
Thriving NextGen

Mental Health
Social Stability & Growth

The current request for proposals is aligned with UWSWI's Mental Health Pathway. The link between low-income status and mental health struggles has been firmly established in research. Furthermore, poor mental health may prevent individuals from becoming upwardly mobile, cementing their economic position and entrenching cycles of generational poverty.

"The evidence is strong for a causal relationship between poverty and mental health. However, findings suggest that poverty leads to mental health and developmental problems that in turn prevent individuals and families from leaving poverty, creating a vicious, intergenerational cycle of poverty and poor health."

– Simon et. al, 2018, Psychiatric Times

Strong and stable mental health is key to upward mobility. At times support services or formal treatment for mental health concerns may be needed. Yet, research paints a grim picture of mental health and the availability of mental health care. The 2023 edition of *The State of Mental Health* by Mental Health America reports that 21% of American adults experience some form of mental illness. That is over 50 million people. Of those, over half of them (55%) receive no treatment.

The State of Mental Health provides an analysis of 15 indicators examining both prevalence of mental health problems and access to mental health care. A single score, representing the interplay of all 15 indicators, was produced. The 50 states and the District of Columbia were ranked according to their scores with higher scores suggesting a higher occurrence of mental health problems, a lack of available care, or both. Indiana ranked 23rd for youth and 41st for adults. When zooming in on an indicator related

to access to care, Indiana ranked last out of all 51 areas, with approximately 39% of adults with a mental illness reporting unmet care needs. This is over 10% higher than the national average.

Considering this landscape, Hoosiers must do everything we can to improve access to mental health supports of all types. Individualized services with a licensed behavioral health provider are essential for those struggling with acute mental illness. Furthermore, preventative programs which help individuals build skills and knowledge related to managing their mental health are also necessary for reducing the demand on our already overburdened mental health care providers.

Grant Details

UWSWI's current Mental Health Pathway Grant will offer the following two funding tracks:

- Funding for programs providing individualized behavioral health services by a licensed mental health provider
- Funding for programs providing mental health education or skill-building

The minimum request is \$50,000. Each funding track will have its own application. Non-profit service providers are welcome to apply to either or both funding tracks.

Eligibility Requirements:

Applicants must be either:

- an IRS registered 501(c) 3 organization in good standing
- or a community group with a 501(c)3 organization in good standing 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.

Proposed programs must serve a majority (50% or more) low-income clients. UWSWI defines "low-income" as households earning no more than 185% of the Federal Poverty Guideline, based on household size.

Grant Scope & Priority

- Priority consideration will be given to programs designed for or exclusively serving low-income populations.
- Priority consideration will be given to programs serving populations with barriers to accessing mental health care and/or programs addressing racial disparities in access to mental health care.