



For Immediate Release
June 10, 2022

Contact: Amy Mangold
812.421.7483
amangold@unitedwayswi.org

United Way of Southwestern Indiana Invests in Improving Mental Health Care Access

Evansville, IN - United Way of Southwestern Indiana (UWSWI) is thrilled to announce an investment of \$400,000 into improving local mental health care access for low-income residents. The Mental Health Pathway Grant is the first funding opportunity for mental health services since UWSWI shifted its focus to address root causes of poverty and help families overcome barriers to economic sufficiency.

Research shows a link between poverty and mental health challenges. Likewise, there is evidence that mental health struggles prevent individuals from escaping poverty, creating a vicious cycle. A significant increase in demand for mental health care services is creating a strain on local providers, which is further limiting access.

Funding will be invested into the following local nonprofit applicants:

Catholic Charities will receive \$177,840 to increase the hours and capacity of a part-time counselor. In addition, grant funds will help underwrite the financial loss of providing a sliding-scale fee model to low-income clients who otherwise cannot afford mental health care.

Youth First is awarded \$222,160 to help underwrite the cost of hiring additional social work staff. The funds will enable Youth First to hire a social worker fluent in Spanish, a Substitute School Support Specialist who will fill the gap when school social workers are absent, and a Clinical Supervisor to support the increase in capacity. Youth First identified a gap in service for students whose primary language is Spanish. This grant will help extend service to students who were previously underserved.

UWSWI is striving to develop a best-in-class grant evaluation process, which includes a thorough evaluation by local experts in the respective Pathway, as well as in financial operations. Scott Branam, CAO of Deaconess Cross Pointe commented, "With the overwhelming demand we are currently seeing in our nation and community for behavioral health, we are very excited United Way is dedicating funds for this critical service. As a member of the review taskforce, it was impressive to see the time and energy put into the process, as well as the rigor that went into the proposal review and selection of grantees. It's a shame there is not enough money to fund every application."

For more information on United Way's Pathways to Potential, visit unitedwayswi.org/pathway-grants.

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About United Way of Southwestern Indiana

United Way envisions communities where all individuals and families have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. The nonprofit organization serves at the center of a network of partners and programs that address critical issues facing thousands of people in Vanderburgh, Warrick, and Spencer Counties. To learn more about United Way's work, visit unitedwayswi.org.