

## United Way of Southwestern Indiana

### August 2024 Request for Proposals Thriving Next Gen: School Engagement



United Way of  
Southwestern Indiana

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 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 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 his research suggests that communities with strong public schools are 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 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, specifically, how 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 Timeline:**

- Application Open within UWSWI’s online grant portal: August 2, 2024
- Application Submission Deadline: September 6, 2024
- Award Announcement: Early December 2024
- Grant funding provided in quarterly disbursements starting January 2025 and ending October 2026.
- Grant reporting will reflect services provided throughout the 2025-2026 and the 2026-2027 school years.

### **Grant Details**

- The Thriving Next Gen grant is intended to provide programmatic support for two years. Future funding is not guaranteed.
- All grant requests must include a line-item spending plan for transparency into how grant funds would be used. The minimum request amount is \$50,000.
- Grantees will be provided with evaluation consultation and support.

### **Eligibility Requirements:**

- 1) 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.
- 2) Applicants must work in collaboration with public school(s) and provide documentation of the partnership(s). Programs supporting exclusively private or parochial schools are not eligible to apply.
- 3) Applicant programs must serve school-age children between Pre-K through grade 12.
- 4) Applicant programs must serve a majority low-income students. UWSWI defines low-income students as students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch.
- 5) Applicant programs 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.

### **Grant Priority Consideration**

- 1) Applicant programs serving a higher percentage of low-income students will be given priority consideration.
- 2) Seasonal programs, such as summer camps, are eligible to apply. However, programs providing continuous services and/or multi-year services may be given priority consideration.