**Request for Proposals**
**Piloting Promising Practices**
**Grant Cycle: July 2016 – June 2019**
**Maximum Annual Grant Amount: $75,000**

**Introduction**

For 89 years, United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI) has been helping Rhode Islanders help themselves by connecting them with the resources and tools that not only improve their lives, but can change them. We believe that Rhode Islanders want to do better for themselves and their families, and that by working together with our partners and investing in proven programs that work over the short-term and are scalable over the long-term, we can strengthen our communities.

In 2014, UWRI launched a new strategic plan, LIVE UNITED 2020, with the goal of changing the lives of 250,000 Rhode Islanders by 2020. As part of this comprehensive strategy  to  provide stability and security to Rhode Islanders and their families, UWRI offers grants to organizations that deliver basic supports and lifelong learning opportunities that provide the skills and resources Rhode Islanders need to be successful.  To accomplish the goals of the strategic plan, UWRI will fund promising ideas or programs designed to improve the lives of Rhode Islanders and collaborations of organizations that are advancing cross-sector work. For more information on our plan, visit www.LIVEUNITEDri.org.

*Theory of Change*
LIVE UNITED 2020 focuses on three main areas to help change the lives of Rhode Islanders: lifelong learning, basic supports, and community engagement.  More specifically, UWRI is focused on achieving the following results:

> Goal: Lifelong Learning
> - Children are prepared for success in school.
> - Young adults are prepared for college and careers.
> - Adults are prepared for careers.
> Goal: Supports to Learn and Earn
> - Adults are employed and earning family-sustaining wages.
> - Rhode Islanders are in stable, safe, and affordable housing.
> - Rhode Islanders are financially secure.
> - Rhode Islanders are healthy.

Each result has corresponding indicators for success that will help UWRI determine the success of its work and the work of its partners. For more information, and to view UWRI's theory of change logic model including our seven results and corresponding indicators, please visit the Grant Opportunities page of our website.

**UWRI Community Investments**

This request for proposals (RFP) is one of three that UWRI is releasing as part of the LIVE UNITED 2020 investment strategy. Funds include:
- Piloting Promising Practices
- Providing Operational Supports
- Scaling Up for Success

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The total amount of funding to be awarded for Piloting Promising Practices, Providing Operational Supports, and Scaling Up for Success is $4,000,000 per year.

These RFPs provide the guidelines for UWRI's July 2016 – June 2019 program investments. UWRI looks forward to receiving a diverse group of proposals that:
- Respond to the goals and desired results outlined in LIVE UNITED 2020
- Reflect a results-driven, collaborative approach to serving Rhode Island communities
- Provide a clear vision for how the applying organizations will provide Rhode Islanders with effective, critical services and supports.

*Grant Period*
The grant cycle for this RFP is July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2019. Grant awards will be made on an annual basis, renewable for years two and three, dependent on fund availability and grantee performance. Grantees must demonstrate successful achievement of performance indicators and be in sound fiscal standing to be eligible for grant renewals.

*Information Sessions*
UWRI will hold information sessions for the nonprofit community at its office at 50 Valley Street in Providence. It is highly recommended that each applying organization or consortium send one or more staff members to an RFP information session. Information sessions will be held on the following dates and times:
- Monday, September 14, 2015, at 9:00 a.m.
- Friday, September 18, 2015, at 1:00 p.m.
- Thursday, September 24, 2015, at 9:00 a.m.
- Thursday, October 1, 2015, at 4:00 p.m.

**Piloting Promising Practices**
**Grant Description**

In recognition of the fact that solutions to our state's challenges are ever-evolving, UWRI has developed this RFP to provide opportunities to organizations that are working to contribute to one or more of the seven results identified above by piloting new ideas or collaborations.

The purpose of UWRI's fund for Piloting Promising Practices is to offer agencies the opportunity to submit proposals for new and innovative ideas to improve a result or, preferably, multiple results. Funding consideration will be given to innovative program ideas that have yet to be tested locally, allow agencies to test logistics, demonstrate program value, and identify areas that allow for continued improvement.

UWRI will entertain proposals for Piloting Promising Practices up to $75,000 per year.

Applying agencies are required to submit a proposal that:
- Shares the objectives of the pilot program.
- Provides research that demonstrates the likelihood of pilot program's success.

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- Identifies examples of where the pilot has had success in other parts of the country or elsewhere in Rhode Island.
- Describes the local conditions that increase the likelihood of the success of the pilot.
- Documents how the program will be carried out.
- Outlines the method(s) that will be used for tracking outcomes.
- Provides a timeline for the pilot and metrics for how success will be measured.
- Describes the process staff will use to determine when the pilot has been successful and is ready to scale.
- Provides evidence that the organization has the capacity to collect data to determine the success of the pilot.

Key expectations for grantees receiving funding will include: a commitment to high-quality data collection, evaluation, active participation in a learning community, attendance at UWRI-organized trainings, and ongoing partnership with UWRI to advance common goals. In turn, grantees will receive guidance from UWRI about how to grow and sustain successful pilots.

**Grant Eligibility Criteria**

Individual organizations and consortiums are invited to apply if they can meet the following requirements:

*Results-Based Accountability:* The program or project must be able to advance one or more of UWRI's identified goals and results. Applying organizations or consortiums must be able to measure, collect and report on key performance measures linked to one or more of UWRI's identified results.

*Collaboration:* The organization must collaborate with partners to achieve shared goals. Applying organizations or consortiums must be able to identify potential partners that will help advance their mission, as well as any current partnerships or collaborations that would be strengthened with UWRI support.

If awarded a Piloting Promising Practices grant, grantees are required to implement the partnership that was built or strengthened over the first eighteen months of the three-year grant cycle. The partnerships will be evaluated midway through the grant cycle. Although not a requirement, UWRI also encourages applying agencies to commit to implementing common data collection and evaluation strategies with partners in order to remain aligned and accountable to one another. Successful proposals will articulate:
   (1) A common agenda in which all participants have a shared vision for change, including a common understanding of the problem or challenge and a joint approach to addressing it through agreed-upon actions;
   (2) Mutually reinforced initiatives in which participants' differentiated actions are coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action; and
   (3) A strategy for continuous, consistent, and open communication between/among all entities to build trust, ensure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.

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*Sustainability:* The organization must demonstrate a sustainable funding plan for current and proposed levels of services, including anticipated sources of funding and any efforts to ensure the long-term fiscal health of the program or project. This includes the need for organizations to contribute a portion of their own resources to the proposed program, outside of any current or requested United Way funding.

*Demonstrate Success:* The organization must have a successful track record in projects of similar nature and demonstrate the capacity, competency and qualifications to plan, implement, and manage this project.

*Documentation:* Applicants must provide the following documentation:
- A letter of determination of 501(c)[3] status from the IRS or have a fiscal agent that has 501(c)[3] status;
- A current Form 990 and the Form 990 from the prior year; and
- A copy of their most recent audit/review and management letter.
    - UWRI expects that the most recent audit/review will have been completed nine months after the end of the applicant's fiscal year. If on a calendar year, the most recent audit/review should be for the year ending December 31, 2014. If on a fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, the most recent audit/review should be for the year ending June 30, 2014.
    - An agency with annual expenditures over $500,000 must have an audit prepared by an independent certified public accountant. An agency with annual expenditures under $500,000 must have a review prepared.

**Questions to address in a letter of intent of no more than three pages in length:**
Accompanying this RFP is UWRI's letter of intent scoring rubric. UWRI provides this information so that organizations applying for UWRI grant funding are aware of the scoring criteria that UWRI will use to evaluate letters of intent. The questions to respond to include:
- Who are the organizations/partners applying for funding? Please include the lead agency and a brief description of that agency's purpose and programs.
- What is the program or project being proposed?
- How does that program or project connect to United Way of Rhode Island's strategic plan and its implementation plan?
- Which of United Way's results and indicators does the project propose to address?
- How does the program or project specifically respond to the request for proposal for which you are applying?

**Process and Timeline**

UWRI invites Rhode Island-based nonprofit organizations to submit Letters of Intent (LOI) by October 8, 2015 in order to be eligible to submit full proposals for one of three funds: Piloting Promising Practices, Providing Operational Supports, and Scaling Up for Success. LOIs will be reviewed using the attached rubric by UWRI Community Investment staff to determine alignment to UWRI's Theory of Change and eligibility to submit full proposals for funding.

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Staff recommendations will be shared with and approved by UWRI's Community Investment Committee. Applicants will be notified of review decisions in early November, and selected applicants will be invited to submit full proposals that will be due December 15, 2015.

Full proposals, limited to 10 pages in length, will be reviewed by UWRI's Volunteer Grant Review Committee. Using a scoring rubric provided by UWRI to applicants and volunteers, the Volunteer Grant Review Committee will evaluate proposals and submit their recommendations to UWRI's Board of Directors for final approval. Applicants will be notified of UWRI's funding decisions in March 2016 and awards to successful applicants will be distributed in July 2016.

*Timeline*

| | |
|---|---|
| September 8, 2015 | UWRI requests for proposals released to public. |
| October 8, 2015 | Deadline for applicants to submit Letters of Intent. |
| October 1 – November 4, 2015 | UWRI staff and Community Investment Committee review Letters of Intent. |
| November 9, 2015 | Applicants are notified of Letter of Intent review decisions. Selected applicants are invited to submit a full proposal. |
| December 15, 2015 | Deadline for invited applicants to submit full proposals for funding. |
| January 11 – March 16, 2016 | UWRI's Volunteer Grant Review Committee reviews proposals and submits recommendations for funding to UWRI's Board of Directors for final approval. |
| April 1, 2016 | Applicants are notified of proposal funding decisions. |
| March 27 – June 15, 2016 | Contracts are developed and sent to funded organizations. |
| July 1, 2016 | Payments are disbursed to UWRI grantees. |

**Submission Directions**

To begin the application process, please visit our website at https://uwriweb.org/agencyportal to submit a letter of intent no later than October 8, 2015. Applicants who are invited to submit a full proposal will receive additional directions on November 9, 2015, and will be required to submit their full proposals no later than December 15, 2015.

For questions or further information, please contact Diana Perdomo at diana.perdomo@uwri.org. Thank you for your interest in partnering with United Way of Rhode Island and helping to strengthen our communities, together.

**PILOTING PROMISING PRACTICES**

1. **Who are the organizations/partners applying for funding?  Please include the lead agency and a brief description of that agency's purpose and programs.**

| Poor – 0 Points | Fair – 5 Points | Strong – 10 Points |
|---|---|---|
| • Does not answer the question in a way that provides any detail on how an organization plans to partner with other agencies.<br>• Does not answer the question in a way that discusses past partnerships.<br>• Does not include a description of the lead agency. | • Provides a description of the lead agency, including a history of past partnerships and work relevant to this project.<br>• Provides a description of potential partnerships in this project.<br>• Names other agencies involved in project and describes how they will be involved.<br>• Clear understanding of how partnership will improve conditions for those being served by the project. | • Provides a description of the lead agency, including a history of past partnerships and work relevant to the proposed project.<br>• Provides a history of success doing work similar to the proposed project, with cited outcomes data from that past success.<br>• Cites other agencies involved in the proposed project, mission alignment, and how they will be involved.<br>• Describes a history of past work with partners in the proposal and how the partnership/partnerships have improved conditions for shared clients.<br>• Clear description of how partnership/partnerships will strengthen over the course of the grant, including the strategy for continuous, consistent, and open communication; proposed outcomes; and performance measurements to assess the relationship(s). |

**PILOTING PROMISING PRACTICES**

2. **What is the program or project being proposed?**

| Poor – 0 Points | Fair – 10 Points | Strong – 20 Points |
|---|---|---|
| • Description does not provide enough information to understand the type of program being proposed. | • Provides a description of the project being proposed.<br>• Provides research that describes the need for the project in the specific community it will serve.<br>• Provides research that describes the need for this type of intervention.<br>• Provides examples of similar interventions that have worked elsewhere. | • Provides a description of the project being proposed.<br>• Provides research that describes the need for the project in the specific community it will serve.<br>• Provides research that describes the need for this type of intervention.<br>• Provides examples of similar interventions that have worked elsewhere.<br>• Provides evidence that this intervention has a high likelihood of success for the population and community served.<br>• Provides a cost-benefit analysis demonstrating cost-effectiveness of the intervention.<br>• Proof that program will balance quality of programming with a need and desire to serve as many people as possible.<br>• Project has a clearly outlined plan for measuring performance on the services provided through the grant.<br>• Outlines a plan to achieve sustainability of work over time. |

3. **How does that program or project connect to United Way of Rhode Island's strategic plan and its implementation plan? What results and indicators does the project propose to address?**

| Poor – 0 Points | Fair – 8 Points | Strong – 15 Points |
|---|---|---|
| • Proposal does not address any of the goals in United Way of Rhode Island's (UWRI) strategic plan or any of the results outlined in UWRI's implementation plan. | • Proposal identifies the UWRI strategic plan goal that it will impact.<br>• Proposal identifies one to two results that the project will address.<br>• Proposal identifies specific indicators within those results that it will address.<br>• Proposal describes how the project will address those goals, results, and indicators. | • Proposal addresses more than one of UWRI's strategic plan goals.<br>• Proposal addresses multiple results from UWRI's implementation plan.<br>• Proposal identifies specific indicators from UWRI's implementation plan that it will address (at least three).<br>• Proposal clearly articulates the intersection between the results the project is seeking to address, with research and data to support working on the multiple elements.<br>• Proposal describes organization(s) history of success addressing the various results.<br>• Proposal describes how organization(s) will work with UWRI to accomplish larger policy goals related to the goals, results, and indicators chosen. |

**PILOTING PROMISING PRACTICES**

4. **How does the program or project specifically respond to the request for proposal for which you are applying?**

| Poor – 0 Points | Fair – 6 Points | Strong – 15 Points |
|---|---|---|
| <ul><li>Does not describe why project falls into the Piloting Promising Practices Category.</li><li>Few details provided about how pilot was developed.</li></ul> | <ul><li>Describes how the project fits the category of funding.</li><li>Describes the scope and size of the pilot.</li><li>Size and scope of the pilot are appropriate for the size of the grant.</li><li>Provides research to demonstrate that the pilot has a strong likelihood of success.</li></ul> | <ul><li>Describes how the project fits the category of funding.</li><li>Describes the scope and size of the pilot.</li><li>Provides research to demonstrate that the pilot has a strong likelihood of success.</li><li>Provides examples of where the pilot has had success in other parts of the country or other areas of Rhode Island.</li><li>Describes the method that will be used for tracking outcomes.</li><li>Describes the local conditions that increase the likelihood of the success of the pilot.</li><li>Describes the process program staff will use to determine when pilot has been successful and is ready to scale.</li><li>Provides evidence that the organization has the capacity to collect data to determine the success of the pilot.</li></ul> |

**United Way of Rhode Island Letter of Intent Scoring Guidelines
2015**
### PILOTING PROMISING PRACTICES

**Theory of Change Alignment Charts**

| Poor – 0 Points | Fair – 10 Points | Strong – 20 Points |
|---|---|---|
| • Project does not align to any of the results desired by UWRI.<br>• At least one section is not completed. | • Section is filled out completely.<br>• Project meets at least one result desired by UWRI and includes the indicators the project focuses on.<br>• Clear connection between the results, indicators, and strategies.<br>• It is logical that the project can successfully connect the results.<br>• Outcomes are reasonable and performance measures will provide clear picture of whether project is successful. | • Section is filled out completely.<br>• Project addresses multiple results.<br>• Clear connection between the results, indicators, and strategies.<br>• Outcomes are ambitious, but realistic. It is clear that they could be achieved.<br>• Performance measures provide a clear understanding of whether or not objectives are met.<br>• It is clear that organization will be able to collect the information necessary to measure the performance.<br>• Activities described will provide a high likelihood that outcomes will occur.<br>• Activities clearly connect to outcomes.<br>• Activities seamlessly address the results described. It does not feel like the project is trying to do two or more separate things at once. |

**United Way of Rhode Island Letter of Intent Scoring Guidelines**
**2015**
**PILOTING PROMISING PRACTICES**

**Budget and Budget Narrative**

| Poor – 0 Points | Fair – 13 Points | Strong – 20 Points |
|---|---|---|
| • Budget request is not appropriate to accomplish the project outlined in the narrative. | • Budget amounts seem appropriate to accomplish the project outlined in the narrative.<br>• Budget narrative is clear and gives further understanding and justification of the costs for the project.<br>• It is clear from reading the budget narrative that the amount of funding requested is appropriate. | • Budget amounts seem appropriate to accomplish the project outlined in the narrative.<br>• It is clear from reading the budget narrative that the amount of funding requested is appropriate.<br>• Staffing costs are appropriate to accomplish the activities described in the narrative and theory of change alignment.<br>• Other sources of funding for the project have been identified.<br>• It is clear from budget narrative that organization is addressing the capacity of its staff to improve the project by providing funding for this work.<br>• Budget includes diversified funding, and does not rely on any one source (i.e. foundations or government) or one type of source (i.e. grant funding). |