



# Community Investments Agency Manual

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## INTRODUCTION

This manual is intended to be a resource guide for any community agencies, including existing and potential partners. Its purpose is to provide general information about the United Way of South Hampton Roads' (UWSHR or United Way) community investments, as well as policies and frequently asked questions that are associated with these investments. The contents of this manual will be reviewed and adapted regularly and are subject to change.

### About United Way of South Hampton Roads

For nearly 100 years, United Way of South Hampton Roads (United Way) has served our local community. As the needs of individuals and families in our community grow more complex, we are adapting our model to better serve them. More than a “funds raiser,” we are bringing people and resources together to solve problems too big for any of us to solve alone. Through the help of generous volunteers, donors and community partners, we are building a brighter future for children, veterans and families across the 757.

We envision a community where all individuals and families have the opportunity to thrive. To fully realize this vision, we must support those living in or near poverty by navigating a path to self-sufficiency. Factors that prevent children and families from experiencing safe, stable and successful lives are complex and must be addressed holistically. Through United Way's investments, we aim to partner with organizations that align with that vision and provide essential services or evidence-based programs to help us build a bridge towards self-sufficiency together.

### POPULATION FOCUS

We focus on partnering with under-resourced populations in the South Hampton Roads communities of Chesapeake, Isle of Wight, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Virginia Beach. This includes those below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) as well as those struggling to make ends meet, who we call ALICE®. To learn more about the ALICE threshold, please [click here](#). Due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, those who were previously considered ALICE may now be earning under the FPL, and those who were previously self-sufficient may now be ALICE or below, so the number of households in need of support has grown exponentially in the last two years.

ALICE® is an acronym coined by a collaborating group of United Ways that stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. The ALICE population represents a growing number of households in our community who work hard and earn more than the official Federal Poverty Level, but less than the basic cost of living. Previously known as the working poor, ALICE makes too much to qualify for most government assistance yet struggles to afford life's essentials. Typically, ALICE is one life changing event from falling into poverty.

The future success of our community is directly tied to the economic stability and wellbeing of ALICE households. When ALICE families suffer and are forced to make difficult choices, we are all impacted – ALICE is your child’s favorite preschool teacher, the home health aide who cares for your niece with disabilities, your elderly neighbor living on a limited fixed income, or the administrative assistants in your office. See link to full report below chart.

	<b>Total Number of Households</b>	<b>% Households Below FPL</b>	<b>% Households Below ALICE Threshold</b>
<b>Chesapeake city</b>	86,122	7.5%	37.0%
<b>Isle of Wight</b>	14,304	9.2%	35.0%
<b>Norfolk city</b>	89,338	17.0%	57.0%
<b>Portsmouth city</b>	34,578	18.6%	57.0%
<b>Suffolk city</b>	34,890	8.6%	39.0%
<b>Virginia Beach city</b>	172,183	6.6%	36.0%

The United Way ALICE Project (2020): <https://www.unitedforalice.org/virginia>

## **COMMUNITY VISION FOR CHANGE**

We envision a community where all individuals and families thrive and reach their full potential. To fully realize this vision, we must support those living in or on the verge of poverty or crisis with navigating a path to self-sufficiency. Factors that prevent children and families from experiencing safe, stable, and successful lives are complex and must be addressed holistically.

Today’s complexity can be partially attributed to the fact that the world around us is changing drastically and the field of human services is not isolated from these changes. Consider, for instance, that technological innovations and globalization impact employment opportunities and create fluidity in the types of jobs and skills required. Changes like these have serious implications for how we deliver services. In this case, rather than helping people get things such as a specific job or training, our field should be building individuals’ capacity to set and achieve goals themselves so that they are adept at navigating work and life as circumstances in their lives and the world around them continue to change.

Ultimately, it is our responsibility to discover ways to design and re-design our programs, organizations, and systems so that they are best equipped to confront complexity while treating people with dignity and maximizing impact. Much of this discovery lies in our commitment to

keeping up with emerging research. As we learn new knowledge, we embrace a growth mindset that challenges us to continuously assess our work and ask, “what can we do better?”

## **Core Focus Areas**

### **Economic Mobility**

Many of our neighbors are facing tremendous hardships due to the pandemic, an unfortunate trend that will likely continue longer than any of us had hoped. Some people, particularly those experiencing significant inequities, were more vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic and are therefore disproportionately impacted. Examples include older adults and people with disabilities who face challenges such as limited mobility and social isolation, as well as families whose earnings prior to the outbreak were limited, making it difficult to save for a crisis.

In South Hampton Roads, over 180,000 households were considered ALICE or living in poverty before the pandemic, and we know that number has grown exponentially in the two years. Investments need to be made to support families on their journey from crisis to stability and from relative stability to thriving. Poverty is incredibly complex, and breaking the cycle means families must overcome multiple internal and external barriers.

### **Education**

Our core area of education focuses on supporting children from cradle to career as they learn and grow. Children are born learning. That’s why United Way has long supported early childhood development, knowing that the earliest years are critical building blocks for later success in school and life.

As children grow, multiple factors play a role in their success. Research demonstrates that social, emotional, and cognitive development are inextricably linked.<sup>1</sup> In addition to academic competencies, youth need a sense of belonging and purpose, the ability to set and pursue goals, resiliency and perseverance to overcome obstacles, and teamwork skills to succeed in school and life. Therefore, this social-emotional learning is foundational to our framework.

### **Health**

Health, whether mental or physical, is essential to our daily lives. It’s hard to help someone chart a path toward self-sufficiency if their basic human needs aren’t being met. Additionally, data shows that poverty causes toxic stress for families – daily decision-making becomes about survival and the ability to plan and set long-term goals can be physically impossible due to stress hormones in the brain.

We also understand that families and individuals may cycle between needing emergency services for life essentials (food, shelter, healthcare, etc.) and services that support increased stability as they navigate the effects of the pandemic and journey towards self-sufficiency. United Way is committed to making investments that work cohesively across the service areas in order to support both crisis intervention and upward mobility for individuals and families in our community.

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<sup>1</sup> Evidence Base for How Learning Happens

Through United Way's investments and the engagement embedded within, we aim to partner with organizations that are ready to join us in embracing transformational change across our collective work.

## **Our Tools**

This kind of cutting-edge, big-picture work requires a network of partners and a set of tools to help us deliver results effectively and efficiently. While not an exhaustive list, the following tools help us maximize use of data, collaboration, and best practice to transform how we approach our collective work. Moreover, we believe our work is bolstered when these tools are used in conjunction with each other.

**Mobility Mentoring**<sup>®</sup> is a model developed by Economic Mobility Pathways (EMPath) that we adopted in 2016. We believe that the methods, principles, and research of Mobility Mentoring can be applied at varying degrees in diverse settings across health and human services.

Among its many tools and resources is the Bridge to Self-Sufficiency (Bridge), which is both an assessment tool and a framework. The Bridge illustrates the core areas (horizontal axis) in which participants set goals and chart their path to self-sufficiency and supports them with making decisions in context. The upward journey (vertical axis) from crisis to stability to thriving helps people consider their future. Taken together, the Bridge helps participants navigate and plan in the areas they need to focus on to achieve upward economic mobility. It also demonstrates that there is no quick journey from poverty to economic independence, and that services must be coordinated, comprehensive, and have a long-term orientation. Here's a link to view the [South Hampton Roads Bridge to Self-Sufficiency](#).

The model also includes an intergenerational approach and accompanying tools, such as a separate Child Bridge. For a more complete description of the Mobility Mentoring model, please visit [EMPath's website](#).

**GHRconnects**, the Community Indicators Dashboard, tracks meaningful, accurate and standardized data over time. It gives a clear picture of how our region is performing in a variety of critical areas and drives data-driven decisions to help us turn the curve and improve quality of life. GHRconnects also documents and promotes best practices and serves as a space for community collaboratives to communicate the impact of their work.

**Unite Us** is a collaborative software that allows us to seamlessly connect people with the services they need in real time. It shifts our work from fragmented services to coordinated care networks. In Unite Us, partners account for their results over time as they help clients who are considered ALICE<sup>®</sup> access the services that are right for them. Our system dramatically increases efficiencies, enables visibility into every client's total journey, and meets the highest standards of security, such as full and verified HIPPA, FERPA, SOC2 compliance. It also helps us achieve the Mobility Mentoring principles of collaboration and individualization.

**Results-Based Accountability (RBA)** is an approach that encompasses population and performance accountability. RBA provides a simple, structured approach for measuring performance of programs and services. RBA has three types of performance measures: how

much did you do?, how well did you do it?, and is anyone better off? Measures that indicate whether anyone is better off are most important and meaningful yet are hardest to control.

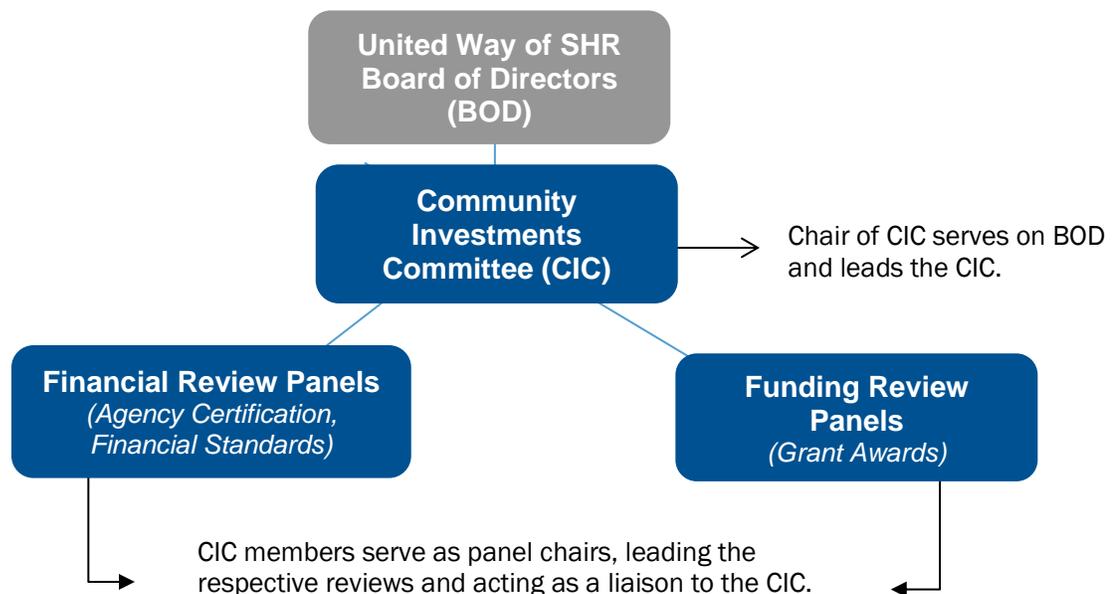
**Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ)** provides reliable, accurate developmental and social-emotional screening for children between birth and age 6. ASQ has been specifically designed to pinpoint developmental progress and catch delays in young children—paving the way for meaningful next steps in learning, intervention, or monitoring. Specifically, the ASQ-3 (Third Edition) screens children’s progress on communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving, personal-social development, while the ASQ:SE-2 (Social-Emotional, Second Edition) is screens only on the social and emotional development of young children.

United Way supports all Early Childhood Success grantees with utilizing these tools. In partnership with EVMS Minus 9 to 5, we are expanding this work through the creation of the Hampton Roads Developmental Screening Initiative. The goals of the initiative are to promote greater awareness and understanding of universal developmental screenings and increase the number of partners using a standardized set of tools that link to a newly formed ASQ community hub. We invite any organizations that serve young children to become a partner with us in this endeavor.

## COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Investment decisions are 100% volunteer driven. The Community Investments Committee (CIC) is comprised of 10 or more community members who meet monthly on all matters relating to community investments. The CIC reports directly to the UWSHR Board of Directors (BOD) and is led by a chair and vice-chair who serve on the BOD. The CIC is responsible for providing general oversight to all community investments and associated policies and procedures.

In addition, members of the CIC serve as the chairs for all review panels. This means they provide leadership to panel volunteers and present recommendations from their respective panels to the CIC for discussion. The CIC then finalizes recommendations and presents them to the BOD for approval. The diagram below illustrates the Community Investments governance structure.



## AGENCY CERTIFICATION

### Certification Overview

Certification is a one-year classification – and not a grant funding opportunity – that United Way of South Hampton Roads offers to local nonprofits that have a direct, substantial presence in UWSHR's service area. United Way Certification process is intended to maintain fiduciary responsibility to our donors. Certification demonstrates to the public that an agency has met a robust set of standards covering three fundamental areas: governance, financial health & management and strategy & mission alignment. All certified agencies have access to the full list of benefits that certification offers. When an agency is approved for certification, this status is active for a year from the approval.

### 2023 Agency Certification Eligibility Criteria

- Open to organizations with an annual gross revenue of \$200,000 or above
- All United Way certified agencies are health and human service agencies that are currently providing services in at least one of United Way's priority areas of 1) Education, 2) Economic Mobility, or 3) Health, and address a need that would be otherwise unmet.
- Agencies must be incorporated not-for-profit.
- Agencies must demonstrate that the organization has generated revenue during the most recently completed fiscal year. This must be reflected in the submitted IRS Form 990.
- Agencies must have a public statement or declaration of their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Agencies must meet certification standards covering the fundamental areas of governance, financial health & management and strategy & mission alignment.
- Agencies must certify that their Board of Directors Chair and CEO/Executive Director have approved the application for certification and its contents in full.
- All certified agencies are expected to run a United Way campaign and ensure all employees have an opportunity to participate, although there is no expectation for the amount that needs to be raised or the percent of individual participation.

### Certification Benefits

Certification offers a variety of valuable benefits to agencies, including:

- Promotion in United Way campaign marketing materials by inclusion on the list of certified agencies. This makes it easy for donors to designate to an organization through the UWSHR workplace campaign.
- Inclusion in other campaigns administered by United Way
- Co-branding opportunities
- Third party endorsement (by United Way) that an organization meets the high standards set by the volunteer Community Investments Committee (CIC) of United Way, so that donors can trust that their monies are being invested in good faith.

- Access to pooled resources, such as participation in United Way’s group health insurance plan
- Leveraged funding or sponsorship opportunities (as an agency in good standing with UWSHR)
- Full access to grant funding opportunities offered through United Way

### Agency Engagement

Grantees agree to participate in convenings and activities that explore best practices, facilitate learning, solve problems and establish shared measures.

### CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

The certification standards cover the core areas of financial health, governance, and strategy alignment and represent the measures by which agencies are evaluated for certification. The standards are maintained by the CIC, which reviews them annually and recommends modifications (as appropriate) to the UWSHR Board of Directors for approval. The table in Appendix A represents the full set of current standards.

### CERTIFICATION APPLICATION & ELIGIBILITY

To be considered for certification, a formal application must be completed and submitted annually by each agency. For currently certified agencies, there is no automatic right of renewal. The application requires agencies to demonstrate that they adequately meet eligibility requirements and standards. The applicant must verify that its Board of Directors and Executive Director/CEO has authorized the submission.

United Way of South Hampton Roads is currently accepting applications for the calendar year 2023 Agency Certifications. New applicants that become approved for Certification will be considered for other benefits (e.g., health insurance, campaign promotion), yet this will be based on the timing of the application period and how it aligns with United Way timelines and procedures.

Each year, all certified agencies will receive digital communication with information about the renewal process and any key dates, and this information will be publicly posted on the UWSHR website once it becomes available. Agencies that are not certified are encouraged to inquire at any time so that they are included in the announcement.

United Way utilizes an online application portal called e-CImpact. All applications will be submitted electronically through the online application portal. A link to access the portal can be found on our website at [HERE](#). You will need to create a new e-CImpact account and then follow the instructions to begin the certification process.

All applications need to be submitted electronically by **Monday, October 24 at 8 a.m.** (Technical assistance will be provided by United Way staff through **Monday, October 17**, in an effort to prevent last-minute issues when United Way staff may not be available. Technical assistance will be done by email, phone, and appointment, depending on the type and complexity of the assistance requested. For questions or technical assistance, please contact:

Vivien McMahan (she/her)

Vice President, Community Impact  
[vmcmahan@unitedwayshr.org](mailto:vmcmahan@unitedwayshr.org)  
757-853-8500 ext. 140

OR

Carey Yates (she/her)  
Associate Vice President, Community Impact  
[cyates@unitedwayshr.org](mailto:cyates@unitedwayshr.org)  
757-853-8500 ext. 130

<b>UWSHR Agency Certification Important Dates</b>	
<b>Application Opens</b>	September 30, 2022
<b>Technical Assistance Ends</b>	October 17, 2022
<b>Submission Deadline/Application Closes</b>	October 24, 2022
<b>UWSHR Board of Directors Review &amp; Vote</b>	November 9, 2022
<b>Agency Notifications</b>	By November 28, 2022

### **CERTIFICATION REVIEW & NOTIFICATION**

While United Way staff support the review process, decisions are 100% volunteer driven.

*Certification Review.* United Way staff conduct an initial review of all applications to ensure applications are complete and identify any potential concerns. Volunteers serving on the Financial Review Panel review all applications for certification, including those from new and returning agencies. They primarily focus on the financial standards.

Findings from the Financial Review Panel are presented to the CIC and a final recommendation is then made by the CIC to the UWSHR Board of Directors for approval.

*Notification.* All agencies will receive written notification annually about whether they are approved for certification or ineligible for the following campaign year, which begins on July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. If an agency is not approved for certification, it is generally welcome to reapply in future years provided that adequate improvements are made. Before reapplying, it is strongly recommended that agencies consult United Way staff for further guidance.

### **GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

As we respond to cultural shifts in the workplace and community, we seek to strengthen and reimagine our work through a variety of existing and emerging strategies. Our grant opportunities will be offered primarily through Request for Proposals (RFPs) released throughout the year to enable flexibility and responsiveness while promoting greater structure and cohesiveness. Across these opportunities, we aim to invest in direct services (including both essential services and program investments) and systems change because we believe this two-pronged approach is crucial to tackling our community's most complex challenges. Organizations are encouraged to apply for any and all opportunities that suit their programming and strategic objectives. Current opportunities are posted on the [Community Investments](#) page of the website.

## **AGENCY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS [FAQS]**

This section is a compilation of the most frequently asked questions (FAQs) we receive from agencies. Some questions are specifically targeted to certified agencies while others are applicable to all agencies. We will continue to update this section so that it represents common questions that are fielded by United Way staff.

### **FAQs Exclusive to Certified Agencies**

#### ***Are there branding expectations for certified agencies?***

Yes. As one of our certified agencies, we encourage you to proudly display the United Way landmark (logo) on your website and marketing/event materials. Each year, we will provide all agencies approved for certification with an electronic version of our landmark and custom clings (e.g., window decals) to post in your office and facilities.

Please carefully review Appendix B, which has specific guidelines that allow us to maintain the strength of the United Way brand and ensure consistency across our community partners.

#### ***Are there any fundraising restrictions for certified agencies?***

No. There are no fundraising blackout periods for certified agencies.

#### ***Can certified agencies with current grant funding request a cash advance?***

At times, an agency may experience a situation that warrants a need for receiving grant funding in advance of the scheduled payment. United Way considers such requests based on the circumstances and its own financial capacity to honor it.

To submit a request, agencies must complete the Cash Advance Request Form which involves specifying the desired amount and responding to a series of questions explaining the rationale for the request and detailing information about the agency's financial condition. This opportunity is only available to certified agencies with current grant funding through United Way of South Hampton Roads. Please reach out to the Vice President of Community Impact to request the Form.

#### ***How does my certified agency request a letter of good standing?***

Outside of the United Way, some funders and corporate sponsors may request that agencies provide a letter of good standing, demonstrating that an agency is in good standing with the United Way. We will gladly fulfill requests that are directed to United Way staff. Inclusion of a draft letter in the request is appreciated and will typically expedite the process.

#### ***How does United Way communicate information to certified agencies?***

Most communications from the United Way are done electronically. Certified agencies can expect to receive investments-related announcements, such as upcoming grant funding opportunities, annual certification information, key dates and deadlines, and invitations to events or convenings. Generally, communications will be sent to agency contacts whose designated role is either Primary or ED/CEO in United Way's online system. Contacts designated as one of these roles serve as the main points of contact and assist with directing each communication appropriately within their respective agencies.

#### ***How does my agency explore the possibility of participating in the United Way's group health insurance plan?***

Certified agencies may be eligible to enroll in the United Way's health and dental insurance plans after a minimum of one year of certification in good standing. It is recommended that you consult with the United Way's Human Resources Department regarding your interest as soon as

possible so that you can obtain specific policy information and key dates. Since open enrollment occurs in June, we generally advise agencies to reach out by April of a given year. Please also review the *Policy for Health Insurance Group Plan* in Appendix C.

***What campaigns is my agency included in as a certified agency?***

Certification qualifies agencies to be considered for inclusion in the campaigns that are managed by United Way. The following breakdown provides an explanation for the distinct stipulations associated with various campaigns.

- *United Way Workplace Campaign:* Agencies that are certified will be included in the United Way's campaign materials based on the dates for which the certification is valid. For example, an agency that is approved for certification for any given year will be included in promotional materials that are published for the campaign beginning on July 1 of that year. In some instances, a decision regarding an agency's certification status may be delayed, which may impact their ability to be included in promotional materials.
- *Combined Charities Campaign (CCC):* By meeting certification standards set forth by the United Way and being approved for certification, agencies have the potential to be part of the CCC. The United Way staff supplies the required information for inclusion in the CCC based on data provided by each agency as part of the annual UWSHR certification process.

While the United Way administers the CCC, a local volunteer committee known as the RAC oversees the requirements and approves qualifying agencies for inclusion on the CCC pledge card and Resource Guide. Note that the CCC requirements vary from the United Way. One key CCC benchmark that differs from the United Way is that an agency's overhead ratio must be below 25% with no exceptions or appeals. The CCC uses the same calculation that is included in the United Way's Certification Standards (see table in Certification section above).

- *Combined Virginia Campaign (CVC):* The Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC) is conducted annually among all classified and hourly state employees and is the only authorized solicitation of employees in the state workplace on behalf of charitable organizations. The application period occurs in the spring each year. Using data collected through UWSHR's annual certification application, the United Way staff typically applies on behalf of each of its certified agencies for participation in the CVC through the United Way of South Hampton Roads Federation. However, certified agencies will be given the opportunity to opt out of this benefit and may apply on their own. It is the responsibility of each agency to verify their information in the [CVC database](#) between January 1 and March 1 each year.

The CVC requirements vary from the United Way. All agencies are required to maintain external financials that are dated within two years of the current CVC. One key CVC benchmark that differs from the United Way is that an agency's overhead ratio must be below 25%, with no exceptions or appeals permitted. The CVC uses the same calculation that is included in the United Way's Certification Standards (see table in Certification section above), though additional information may be requested from agencies submitting the Form 990EZ. In addition:

- If an agency has not participated in the CVC for the past three years or more, then they are required to apply themselves.

- If an agency has had a change in CEO or their Doing Business As (DBA) name in the past two years, then the agency must sign and mail a New Business Agreement to the CVC before the application to participate in the campaign will be accepted.
- There is a minimum threshold for CVC donor designation totals in order for an agency to continue participation in the campaign. As of 2018, the minimum thresholds are: \$250 for new charities and \$750 for returning charities. If an agency does not meet this threshold, then it must 'sit out' from the CVC for one year.

The CVC will contact each agency directly about inclusion or denial in the campaign. Please note that the United Way does not administer the CVC, so donor designation data related to this campaign is distributed by another entity and therefore not included in the United Way portal. Please see the CVC [Guide for Charities](#) for more detailed information.

- *Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)*: Due to changes made to the process in 2017 by the United States Office of Personnel Management, agencies that wish to participate in the CFC must now apply independently and cover any associated costs.

## FAQs about Donor Designations

### ***What are donor designations and how do they work?***

Donors contributing to United Way of South Hampton Roads may designate their gift to be credited to one or more agencies. The designated amount will be discounted by an approved amount for campaign and administrative expenses and by a fixed percentage determined annually for collection loss due to un-collectible pledges. Disbursements are released on a quarterly basis as donor payments are received.

Any designations to an agency represent the minimum it will receive. Additional funds may be awarded to the agency through UWSHR's grant funding processes, if applicable. Thus, donor-designated funds are distinct and separate from grant funding.

### ***Does an agency have to be certified to receive donor designated contributions?***

No, a donor may elect to write-in an organization of his/her choice. United Way of South Hampton Roads limits write-in designations to charitable agencies located in Chesapeake, Isle of Wight, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Virginia Beach; Hampton/Newport News and contiguous areas in North Carolina and Virginia; or agencies with statewide presence, which serve those local communities.

To qualify, the agency must be designated by a donor. Agencies selected must respond in a timely manner to United Way inquiry, verify compliance with IRS 501(c)3 and the Commonwealth of Virginia registration (VDACS) requirements, and provide proof that their primary purpose is provision to a local, public, charitable **social service**. Designations may not be made to capital campaigns.

Agencies that receive designations (those that are "written in") which are not certified by United Way of South Hampton Roads are not listed in any promotional materials distributed by United Way.

Please also review the *Policy on Designations for Certified Agencies Listed in Campaign Materials* and the *Policy Regarding Write-In/Designated Contributions to Agencies Not Listed in Campaign Materials* in Appendix D.

***How does my agency find out the amount in designations that it received from campaigns?***

Since United Way administers its own UWSHR workplace campaign and the CCC, agencies have access to an [online designations portal](#) to review pledges received only through UWSHR led campaigns run online with gross designation information for pledges. Additional information, including actual payment details and donor names, if provided by the donor, will be added into the portal over time.

Each year, agencies can expect to begin accessing data from the prior year around April, and updates will be provided in real-time through June 30<sup>th</sup>. It is the responsibility of the agency to retrieve and maintain documentation of this data. Since the use of an online portal for this function is relatively new, these details will continue to evolve. Agencies can access the online portal at <https://uwshr.stratusliveportal.com/>.

Upon first visiting the portal, your agency will need to create an account. Once you enter the requested information, United Way staff will confirm your access. Once you receive confirmation of your account log-in, please log-in. The landing page will be the home screen for the portal. From the home screen, you will have access to your organization's profile, compliance reports, donor lists, donor file extraction, and user guide.

**Other FAQs**

***Is certification an eligibility requirement for grant funding?***

United Way offers a range of grant funding opportunities, and the eligibility requirements vary for each. Please see the "Eligibility" section of each Request for Proposal (RFP) released in order to know if certification is required.

***Do all certified agencies receive grant funding?***

No. While certification provides full access to funding opportunities, it does not guarantee that an agency will be awarded grant funds.

***In general, what is expected of certified and/or grant-funded agencies in relation to communication with United Way?***

United Way appreciates its many valued partners. Effective, timely communication by certified and/or grant-funded agencies is a cornerstone of any strong relationship. Beyond the requirements associated with certification standards and funding agreements, certified and grant-funded agencies are expected to:

- Be responsive to United Way requests in a timely manner
- Meet all published due dates and communicate in advance any challenges in meeting these deadlines
- Promptly notify United Way when key information changes or important updates emerge, such as:
  - Staffing transitions involving CEOs/Executive Directors and other positions serving as primary United Way contacts
  - Changes to branding such as the adoption of a new legal name or logo
  - Changes to general contact information, such as primary mailing address or main office location

***What is United Way’s policy on late applications and/or missed interviews?***

Please review the United Way Funding Guidelines in Appendix F.

***Are there limits to the number of grant applications or to a program or agency’s maximum award?***

Please review the United Way Funding Guidelines in Appendix F.

***My agency is interested in obtaining information about the United Way Foundation. What steps should we take?***

The United Way Foundation aims to assist our agencies in guaranteeing their future and financial stability through a permanent and profitable stream of income. Entrusting the gifts from your volunteers and donors in the United Way Foundation offers a nonprofit agency flexibility, a simple fee structure, the expertise of our volunteer Foundation Board of Trustees and investment professionals. For more information, please see the *Foundation Description* in Appendix E.

## **RECOMMENDED RESOURCES**

With the internet at our fingertips, a wealth of resources is available for nonprofits. Here are a few of our favorites!

- [GHR Connects](#) (Greater Hampton Roads Community Indicators Dashboard) – access accurate, local data, resources, and best practices
- [BoardSource](#) – stay informed and inspired about strong nonprofit governance
- [Nonprofit Quarterly \(NPQ\)](#) – offers a wide array of nonprofit practitioner resources, including webinars with relevant and timely information. Recent topics have produced useful financial-related information, such as:
  - FASB, Part 1: [Preparing for the BIG Change](#)
  - FASB, Part 2: [New FASB Guidelines](#)
  - FASB, Part 3: [Update on FASB Requirements](#)
  - [Financial Risks](#)

## **CONTACT US**

We’re here to help! If you have any questions or comments, please refer to the [Community Investments](#) page of our website for more details and contact information of United Way staff.

**APPENDIX A: CERTIFICATION STANDARDS TABLE**

<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	<b>At the foundation of successful and high-performing nonprofits is the presence of a strong board and executive leadership. This means that organizations must understand and implement the best practices associated with board governance, personnel management, and leadership. Effective governance is also essential to managing and leading an ethically sound, accountable organization.</b>			
<b>Standard</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Type</b>
<b>Governance 1a:</b> <b>Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) registration</b>	<a href="#">VDACS Registered Charitable Organization Database</a> alternative documentation may be acceptable if Database is not up to date.	VDACS is the state department that oversees the statewide registration process for nonprofit charitable organizations. Some organizations may be exempt from annual registration or excluded from the requirements, while others are required to register annually. This metric allows volunteers to assess the legal status of nonprofit organizations to ensure requirements are met.	Up to date VDACS filing status	Mandatory
<b>Governance 1b:</b> Incorporation as a not-for-profit	Copy of IRS determination letter	An IRS determination letter states the official recognition of exemption from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The letter will include date of the determination. An IRS Determination Letter is NOT the agency's Tax-Exempt Letter	IRS determination letter	Mandatory
<b>Governance 1c:</b> <b>Current filing of IRS Form 990</b>	Copy of current IRS Form 990; if filing for an extension, copy of completed Form 8868 as evidence.	The IRS Form 990 collects a wealth of information pertaining to an organization's mission, activities, finance, and governance, enabling a review of many of the Certification metrics. To promote the highest level of transparency, organizations are expected to make its most recent IRS Form 990 publicly available on its website.	Evidence of 900 filing, Tax-exempt status (Line I) is 501(c)(3), 990 publicly available	Mandatory

<p><b>Governance 1d:</b> Directors' and officers' liability insurance (D&amp;O)</p>	<p>Application</p>	<p>D&amp;O insurance covers the organization and its board of directors against actual and alleged wrongful acts. These include the areas of governance, financial, and employment liabilities. Having adequate insurance coverage is a much needed and expected protection for nonprofits.</p>	<p>Minimum of \$1,000,000 in coverage</p>	<p>Discretionary</p>
<p><b>Governance 1e:</b> Board of Directors' membership and composition</p>	<p>Board Roster (including employer of each member); Application</p>	<p>Given United Way's mission to serve the local communities of South Hampton Roads, it is highly recommended that board members are locally based. Moreover, boards are expected to have active operational control at the local level, with an emphasis on financial oversight to ensure that dollars raised by the United Way remain within the community we serve. In some instances, the lack of local presence within a board may make an agency ineligible for certification.</p>	<p>Reviewers assess various aspects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum of 5 members and larger boards should be "working" boards</li> <li>• Operational control and decision-making including financial oversight is locally based</li> </ul>	<p>Discretionary</p>
<p><b>Governance 1f:</b> Board of Directors' activity and engagement</p>	<p>Application; Annual Board Meeting Minutes, IRS Form 990</p>	<p>Highly effective boards are those that are actively and meaningful engaged in the activities of the organization, which includes upholding their responsibilities as a board. Reviewers assess the level of board engagement by examining such factors as the average annual attendance rates across members, frequency of board and committee meetings, and participation in fundraising and development. Generally, board members are expected to serve without financial compensation and without conflicts of interest, regardless of whether they are perceived or actual.</p>	<p>Reviewers assess various aspects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full board meets at least 4 times per year</li> <li>• Min. 50% avg. annual attendance rate</li> <li>• "Give or get" fundraising participation by all board members</li> <li>• No conflicts of interests among members</li> </ul>	<p>Discretionary</p>

		<i>*UWSHR reserves the right to request additional meeting minutes if there are questions regarding board oversight.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No financial compensation of members</li> </ul>	
<b>Governance 1g:</b> CEO compensation percentage	Calculation from IRS Form 990 [(Reportable compensation for CEO + Estimated other compensation)/Total expenses]	This calculation examines if an organization's CEO compensation is reasonable. This metric is dependent upon several factors that must be considered to determine whether compensation exceeds what is reasonable. These include the actual job description, required education or experience, local compensation trends, and the overall budget of an organization.	Dependent on multiple factors (see explanation)	Discretionary
<b>Governance 1h:</b> Personnel policies and procedures	Application	The documentation of key personnel policies and procedures is essential for nonprofits because they detail how an organization operates. Specifically, well-documented policies and procedures contribute to many important aspects of an organizations, including complying with the law, setting expectations, promoting fairness and consistency, and providing legal protection.	<p>Various policies are expected to be in writing, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procedures for handling employee grievances and disciplinary issues</li> <li>Non-discrimination statement that identifies organization as an Equal Opportunity Employer</li> <li>Anti-abuse or anti-harassment policy</li> <li>Existence of succession plan</li> </ul>	Discretionary
<b>Governance 1i:</b> Legal action or litigation	Application; external financials	The existence of any legal action or litigation involving the organization or its personnel will be reviewed to assess whether the situation and circumstances represent "normal course of business" or if its significance	No legal issues or if legal situation exists, deemed as "normal course of business"	Discretionary

		may impact the future and sustainability of the organization.		
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**FINANCIAL HEALTH & MANAGEMENT**

This section emphasizes the importance of nonprofit financial health as well as ensuring that organizations have sound financial management practices in place. Financial health and management relate directly to an organization’s ability to perform effectively and is a mechanism by which organizations can be held accountable to the philanthropic community.

Many of these standards are based on a set of indicators that may be calculated during the certification review process. Taken together, these indicators (or a subset of them) are a useful starting point at which an organization’s financial condition can be evaluated. It is also helpful to consider these calculations over multiple years to assess trends over time. Additional context may be required to more fully understand an organization’s financial health.

Standard	Data Source	Explanation	Benchmark	Type								
<b>Financial Health 2a:</b> External financials	Copy of current audit or external review (see table under Benchmark); if needed, Communication of Significant Deficiencies or Material Weaknesses (e.g., SAS 115 letter, management letter).	Financial statements that are prepared by an independent accountant ensure financial accountability and accuracy. An additional layer of oversight by a committee of the Board of Directors, either through a formal audit committee or a finance or executive committee, is encouraged. Significant findings documented within the external financials will be examined. To promote the highest level of transparency, organizations are expected to make its most recent audit or external review publicly available on its website. UWSHR recognizes that completing an audit for the sole purpose of United Way certification creates a considerable strain on agency finances. This standard represents our commitment to	Timely financials are available based on requirements below; Unqualified/clean opinion or no exceptions <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Annual Gross Revenue</th> <th>Required Financial Statement</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>≥ \$1M</td> <td>Annual independent audit</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$500,000 – \$999,999</td> <td>Annual independent audit <u>if</u> UWSHR funding constitutes 10% or more of budget; otherwise, external review is acceptable</td> </tr> <tr> <td>&lt; \$500,000</td> <td>Annual external review <u>or</u> independent audit</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Annual Gross Revenue	Required Financial Statement	≥ \$1M	Annual independent audit	\$500,000 – \$999,999	Annual independent audit <u>if</u> UWSHR funding constitutes 10% or more of budget; otherwise, external review is acceptable	< \$500,000	Annual external review <u>or</u> independent audit	Mandatory
Annual Gross Revenue	Required Financial Statement											
≥ \$1M	Annual independent audit											
\$500,000 – \$999,999	Annual independent audit <u>if</u> UWSHR funding constitutes 10% or more of budget; otherwise, external review is acceptable											
< \$500,000	Annual external review <u>or</u> independent audit											

		upholding financial accountability while ensuring that the requirements are flexible and fair.	*All agencies that are required to secure an independent audit for other purposes must submit this audit to UWSHR. UWSHR retains discretion and may still request an audit on a case-by-case basis.	
<b>Financial Health 2b:</b> Basis of accounting	IRS Form 990 (Part XII, Line 1)	The basis of accounting specifies the method an organization uses to record and report income and expenses. Cash accounting does not comply with GAAP, which means that an auditor cannot grant an unqualified opinion that the financial statements comply with GAAP.	Use of accrual accounting	Mandatory (exceptions may be granted for small-sized nonprofits)
<b>Financial Health 2c:</b> Annual balanced operating budget	Verified in application	It is important for all nonprofits to have an annual operating budget in place. The organization's mission and priorities are conveyed through the budget, thus requiring oversight by the Board.	Operating budget exists and has Board approval	Mandatory
<b>Financial Health 2d:</b> Operational, unrestricted cash reserve	Application, UWSHR Foundation account	Organizations that have an established operating reserve that is unrestricted are best positioned to weather unanticipated circumstances. Such reserves should not exceed cash flow needs and fair allowances for operational and/or capital replacement contingencies.	Existence of and amount in reserve account(s)	Discretionary
<b>Financial Health 2e:</b> Days of cash on hand	Calculation from IRS Form 990 [(cash, non-interest-bearing + savings and temporary cash investments)/Total expenses]*365	This number serves as a measure of liquidity and represents the number of days for which cash is available to meet daily expenses. In an ideal world, organizations would have	Two levels of flagging occur during the review process: those with less than 30 days and those that have between 30-89 days. The desired trend is an increasing number of days.	Discretionary

		3-6 months of expenses on hand, though this threshold does not always reflect the reality of health and human service nonprofits in South Hampton Roads.		
<b>Financial Health 2f:</b> Debt ratio	Calculations from IRS Form 990 & Interim financials [total debt/total assets]	The debt ratio, sometimes referred to as a leverage ratio, is one way to measure the extent to which a nonprofit uses debt to support its activities. Debt may create an issue of financial viability or survival. Debts should not result from management (e.g., nonpayment of federal withholding.)	Generally, a debt ratio should not exceed 0.5 or 50%. The desired trend is a decreasing ratio.	Discretionary
<b>Financial Health 2g:</b> Operating expense percentage (e.g., “overhead ratio”)	Calculation from IRS Form 990 [administrative expenses/total revenue]	Examining this ratio helps assess whether operating expenses are reasonable in relation to an organization’s total revenue. United Way uses “total revenue” as the denominator because it reflects the true ratio of operating costs in comparison to dollars raised in a given year, regardless of whether those dollars are expended in that same year. It should be noted that overhead does not have a <a href="#">standardized calculation</a> .	30% or less	Discretionary
<b>Financial Health 2h:</b> Fundraising expense percentage	Calculation from IRS Form 990 [fundraising expenses/total revenue]	This calculation represents the percentage of total functional expenses an organization spends on fundraising. Generally, lower percentages are better. Examining this ratio helps to ensure that fundraising expenses are reasonable in relation to an organization’s total revenue. United Way uses “total revenue”	Under 10%	Discretionary

		as the denominator for the same reason as stated above.		

<b>Strategy and Mission Alignment</b>				
<b>This section explores how the organization’s mission and programming align with the mission and geographic focus of United Way of South Hampton Roads.</b>				
<b>Standard</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Type</b>
<b>Strategy &amp; Mission 3a:</b> Local presence	Application, Current Annual Report or description of programs and health and human care services provided by the organization	For the purposes of certification, services must have a demonstrated track record and a substantive presence in South Hampton Roads.	Direct and substantial local presence within South Hampton Roads communities of Chesapeake, Isle of Wight, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and/or Virginia Beach (based on total # of individuals or households served annually in relation to scope of agency’s work)	Mandatory
<b>Strategy &amp; Mission 3b:</b> Strategic alignment with UWSHR	Application; Current Annual Report or description of programs and health and human care services provided by the organization	In order to further the mission of United Way of South Hampton Roads, reviewers will review the organization’s mission, vision, values, and/or services to ensure alignment with the UWSHR mission and priorities.	Organization’s mission and services align with UWSHR mission and priorities	Mandatory
<b>Strategy &amp; Mission 3c:</b> Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement/anti-racism statement	Application, DEI Statement	This is a public facing statement demonstrating the agency’s commitment to advancing equity, increasing diversity, and creating inclusion. United Way of South Hampton Roads commits to leveraging our assets and those of our partners to support the lasting, transformational changes needed	DEI Statement shared on organization’s website	Mandatory

		to create a community that is fully inclusive and equitable for all.		
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## APPENDIX B: BRANDING GUIDELINES

The United Way of South Hampton Roads (UWSHR) brand identity is the tangible expression of all that our organization and those we partner with stand for. It embodies what we do, how we do it and why we are a beacon of trust and support throughout our community. The most fundamental visual element of a brand identity is its landmark (logo). **The components of our landmark – the rainbow of hope, the hand of support and the person as a symbol of humanity – communicate the important United Way brand characteristics — caring, inspiring, trustworthy and approachable.**

As one of our certified and/or funded agencies, we encourage you to proudly display the landmark on your website and marketing/event materials. Below are guidelines to maintain the strength of the United Way brand and ensure consistency across our community partners:

- **Full Color**

The full-color version of the United Way landmark is the primary landmark of the identity system. It is required that this version be used in branded applications whenever possible, particularly websites. Pantone spot color is the preferred usage, but CMYK and RGB reproduction files of the full color landmark are also available for use (see color palette template on next page).

- **Control Box**

The control box is the white border that surrounds the landmark. It must be used to create separation when the landmark is placed on colored backgrounds.

- **Clear Space**

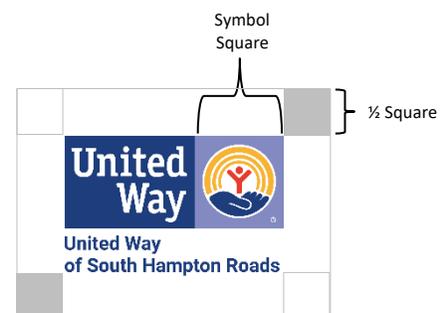
Clear space frames the landmark and separates it from other elements including text and edges. The landmark must be surrounded by clear space that is a minimum of 1/2 the height of the symbol square.

- **Minimum Size**

When placed on a website, the landmark should be at least 90 pixels or 1.25" wide.

- **Please do not...**

- attempt to redraw or rescale the landmark
- alter the colors in the landmark
- tilt the landmark
- distort the shape of the landmark
- add elements inside the landmark
- rearrange the elements of the landmark
- alter the shape of the landmark in any way
- substitute type in the landmark
- put other words or phrases inside the landmark
- extract any of the graphic elements or words in the landmark to use separately



## APPENDIX C: AGENCY POLICY FOR HEALTH INSURANCE GROUP PLAN

UWSHR administers a group health benefits plan on behalf of certified agencies. Plan participation is neither mandatory nor automatically available to all certified agencies. Newly certified agencies are eligible after 1 year of certification.

UWSHR reserves the right to limit admission to certified agencies based on a reasonable evaluation of risk associated with their participation. It will consider plan admission of new applicant agencies only after consideration of their **preceding** coverage and history.

Once an agency has been accepted as a participant, it must remain in the group health plan for the duration of the plan's contract. Should the agency decide to withdraw at the end of the contract term, it must provide UWSHR sixty (60) days' notice preceding the end of the coverage year (present expiration is July 1). If an agency elects to withdraw, it will not be reconsidered for plan participation for thirty-six (36) months.

If a participating agency falls thirty (30) days in arrears on their premium payments, UWSHR will debit the agency's fund distribution by the delinquent amount. Also, if the agency fails to fulfill its obligations, UWSHR reserves the right to terminate its participation during the plan year. If this occurs, the agency's leadership and participation employees will be notified by certified letter.

## **APPENDIX D: DESIGNATIONS**

### **Policy on Designations for Certified Agencies Listed in Campaign Materials**

Contributors to United Way of South Hampton Roads may designate their gift to be credited to one or more certified agencies. The designated amount will be discounted by an approved amount for campaign and administrative expenses and by a fixed percentage determined annually for collection loss due to un-collectible pledges. Designations is the minimum any certified agency will receive. Additional funds may be awarded to the agency through UWSHR's competitive funding processes, if applicable.

### **Policy Regarding Write-In/Designated Contributions to Agencies Not Listed in Campaign Material**

A donor may elect to write-in an organization of his/her choice, which serves local charitable/social service needs. United Way of South Hampton Roads limits write-in designations to charitable agencies located in Chesapeake, Isle of Wight, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Virginia Beach; Hampton/Newport News and contiguous areas in North Carolina and Virginia; or agencies with statewide presence, which serve those local communities.

Agencies designated (or "written in") which are not certified by the United Way of South Hampton Roads are not listed in any promotional materials which are distributed by United Way. This is unlike the public sector/government campaign, which list all qualified applicants. To qualify, the agency must be designated by a donor. Agencies selected must respond in a timely manner to United Way inquiry, verify compliance with IRS 501(c)3 and the Commonwealth of Virginia registration (VDACS) requirements, and provide proof that their primary purpose is provision to a local, public, charitable social service.

Agencies whose primary purpose is not charitable/social service are excluded. Accordingly, churches, church programs and schools, educational institutions and foundations, cultural groups, service clubs, political organizations, and legal defense funds are not eligible. Designations may not be made to capital campaigns.

Donors designating agencies that cannot provide requested verification of charitable status with the Commonwealth of Virginia and IRS (or which declines to accept the funds or do not respond in a timely fashion to our inquiry) will be informed the designation cannot be honored. They may consider an alternative contribution or request the refund of a cash gift or cancellation of a payroll deduction pledge.

United Way will make every effort to contact the donor if the write-in designation cannot be processed. If the United Way cannot contact the donor, any payments will be treated as undesignated contributions available for the competitive funding processes.

United Way reserves the right to disqualify any agency based on documented unethical conduct, excessive overhead, or inappropriate promotion.

United Way applies a charge consistent with its audited fundraising expense against all write-in designations and applies a system-wide factor for shrinkage (pledges made but not paid) against all write-in payroll deduction designations.

## APPENDIX E: UNITED WAY FOUNDATION



Choosing the United Way of South Hampton Roads Foundation as the stewards of your donor's long-term gifts offers your organization the freedom to focus on those you are here to serve.

The United Way Foundation will work to secure for you a permanent and profitable stream of income into the future. United Way has been there for our agencies and the South Hampton Roads community since 1923. We strive every year to provide resources for our most vulnerable neighbors and with the Foundation, we look to the future to assist our agencies in guaranteeing their future and financial stability.

### Why the United Way Foundation?

Entrusting the gifts from your volunteers and donors in the United Way Foundation offers a non-profit agency flexibility, a simple fee structure, the expertise of our volunteer Foundation Board of Trustees and investment professionals. United Way and the United Way Foundation have the resources and the knowledge that can assist those agencies supported through our campaign to create a steady stream of income for the future.

### What the United Way Foundation Offers Our Agencies

*Minimum Contribution Requirements:* A fund of any type can be created with a minimum contribution of \$10,000 and donations in any amount are accepted once the fund is established. Common fund types at the United Way Foundation include: Endowed Donor Advised Fund, Unrestricted Fund, Field of Interest Fund, Designated Fund, Organizational Fund or a Scholarship Fund.

*Asset Types Used to Create Funds:* Types of assets used to create a charitable fund include: cash, securities, retirement accounts, insurance policies or real estate. If a deferred legacy gift is preferred, your donor can make a bequest in their will naming your agency as the recipient. Because the United Way Foundation fully understands what it means to hold a public charity status, it can offer you the philanthropic services needed to secure the future of your organization and its good works.

*Fees for Managing Charitable Funds:* **Our fees structure is simple** – there is no initial start-up cost when you work with the United Way Foundation. You have only a **0.5%** administrative fee for philanthropic services that come from your fund – regardless of the fund type. If the value of your fund is greater than \$1 million, the administrative fee is negotiable.

*Fund Disbursements:* Fund disbursements are not held to our spending policy but *to the Fund holder(s)*. Although most funds adopt a spending policy of 3.5% of an average of 12 trailing quarters (3 years), funds can be requested at any time during the year and in any amount. The United Way Foundation Board of Trustees will review the request to confirm that the disbursement is meeting the guidelines set forth in the establishment of said fund.

*Management of Funds:* The funds of the United Way Foundation are managed by outside investment managers in a diversified investment portfolio structure. This portfolio, its investment and management, is regularly reviewed by the Foundation's Investment Committee.

*The United Way Foundation's mission is to provide for the charitable wishes of donors who desire to establish long-term support for families and individuals through United Way and foundation affiliated agencies.*

## **APPENDIX F: UNITED WAY FUNDING GUIDELINES**

### **Late Application Submissions**

Agencies seeking to apply to opportunities offered by the United Way must submit the required application and all associated documents or materials by the stated deadline. Late submissions will not be considered unless an extension is requested in advance of the deadline. Extensions will only be granted on a case-by-case basis when extenuating circumstances justify one.

### **Number of Applications Allowed**

There is no formal limit to the number of applications a single organization can submit. However, agencies are expected to limit their submissions to a reasonable number of applications per Request for Proposals (RFP). Agencies choosing to submit multiple applications to a single RFP should make this decision carefully, considering such factors as the agency's priorities, greatest needs, request amounts, and whether any of the applications could be combined to make a more cohesive presentation of the work. Submitting too many applications may overwhelm or confuse volunteer reviewers, which can negatively affect the agency's outcome.

### **Limits on Maximum Awards**

There is no formal limit to the award amount that an agency may request and be granted. However, two calculations are evaluated during the funding decision-making process and may affect the outcome of an agency's request(s).

The first calculation is the requested amount for an individual program as a percentage of the program and/or agency's total revenue. Considering this calculation helps reviewers understand the degree to which a diversity of revenue streams exists and consequently, the significance of United Way's contribution. This informs the level of risk associated with the investment as well as the agency's reliance on the funds.

The second calculation is the total amount across all requests by and/or awards to a single agency as a percentage of United Way's total investment amount in the respective year. This calculation ensures that United Way uses donor dollars in a way that supports the entire community, including a diversity of organizations. Applications for collaborative proposals may be excluded from this calculation.

### **Grant Applicant Interviews**

Interviews are sometimes used as a part of the review process. Agencies that are assigned interviews are highly recommended to schedule more than one person in case of any last-minute complications. Arriving late to an interview will jeopardize some or all of an agency's allotted time, negatively impacting the scoring. If an agency does not show up for an interview, they will earn a zero for the interview score and may be disqualified. Exceptions will only be granted on a case-by-case basis when extenuating circumstances justify one.