



## 2020 Request for Proposals – Community-Building Mini Grants

### Outline

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### I. Organizational Overview

United Way of Greater New Bedford was founded in 1953 and for the past 67 years has been working to address the most pressing needs in the community. As a leading non-profit in the Southcoast, we have raised and invested nearly \$10M dollars into community programs over the past decade.

**Our Vision:** We envision a region where all people have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

**Our Mission:** We mobilize people, partnerships, and resources to catalyze change that strengthens the communities we serve.

**Our Focus:** Like United Way Worldwide, we are focused on creating community-based and community-led solutions that strengthen the cornerstones for a good quality of life: Health, Education, Financial Stability, and Basic Needs.

**Communities:** United Way of Greater New Bedford serves the City of New Bedford and surrounding towns of Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Freetown, Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester and Wareham.

### II. Program Summary

United Way's Community Building Mini-Grants Program is the only local resource to promote civic involvement and bring about positive change at the grassroots all-volunteer level. The goal of the Mini-Grants Program is to encourage volunteerism and creative thinking as a viable way to strengthen all aspects of our community.

The program encourages community building by supporting citizens to come together, form and build relationships, and address a need or issue of concern. As part of the program, we encourage groups to engage various community members and collaborate with other groups, organizations, etc. in the process. This is an opportunity for everyday citizens to engage in projects that benefit not only their immediate community but also the broader community. We support grassroots volunteer efforts by encouraging community members to contribute by taking responsibility and action for their community.

The program provides financial and technical support to all-volunteer groups working to strengthen the community through projects that address locally identified concerns or issues. United Way provides financial support to get projects off the ground (up to \$2500). Also, through workshops and networking opportunities, grant recipients learn new skills, collaborate and leverage resources.

Since 1995, Mini-Grants has supported 808 community building projects by over 419 local all-volunteer based grassroots groups for over \$820,314. In 2019, nineteen projects were funded a total of \$25,000 by United Way's Mini-Grant Program.

### III. Focus Areas

United Way of Greater New Bedford seeks proposals for projects that:

- Are small in scale, specific, innovative and achievable within 1 year
- Demonstrate how they will build community by engaging citizens in the project to address a need or issue of concern.
- Align with any of the following areas:

**Health:** To create an environment where residents, families, and communities can access the support they need to maintain or improve their health and well-being

**Education:** To improve student outcomes and engage families in the education of their children so children have the opportunity for educational attainment and life success

**Financial Stability:** To connect individuals to opportunities that provide a pathway for economic mobility, ultimately breaking the cycle of poverty

**Basic Needs:** To provide direct assistance to those in urgent need of basic necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, toiletries, shelter, safety, etc.

### IV. Grant Details

#### Funding Specifics

- Projects ***may be*** funded up to \$2,500. If your volunteer group has a pressing need for a higher level of funding then please contact United Way of Greater New Bedford to discuss.
- All funds are disbursed on a reimbursement only basis. Groups may submit reimbursement requests via CommunityForce up to four times over the course of the funding cycle. All reimbursements requests **must** be submitted online via your organization's dashboard on CommunityForce.
- One project per group per funding cycle
- Funded projects/events must begin after the date of award decision (May 2020) and reach completion within 12 months (May 2021).
- Approved funds will be made available for reimbursement as of July 1, 2020.
- If you applied for funding from United Way of Greater New Bedford the previous year(s), you are eligible to submit a new application as long as you completed your previous project and submitted a final progress report to United Way.

#### What We Will Not Fund

- Salaried positions
- Rent or utilities
- Food – for sale or nonessential to the project
- T-shirts and other promotional items that you plan to sell for fundraising purposes
- Office equipment- computers, printers, laptops, etc.
- Paid advertising
- Insurance, Security, Police/Fire Detail
- Application/Registration/Membership Dues/Fees
- Scholarships, Pageants, Contests etc.
- School-based field trips
- Projects that are in and of themselves fundraising
- Capital Improvements

### **Additional Grantee Benefits**

- Skill-Building Workshops: provide information and skills on a variety of topics that will strengthen and build your group
- Networking: events to connect, share ideas, information, experiences and resources that inspire new partners for collaborations and continue to work of community building
- Grantees have the opportunity to participate on the Community Building Mini-Grants Program Review Committee
- Access to United Way's vast network or resources

## **V. Application Details**

### **Eligibility Requirements**

- Project must benefit the Greater New Bedford community.
- Your group must be comprised of **all volunteers**. Your group has no employees, and the members in the group are participating on a voluntary basis on their own time. They are not participating as part of their professional roles.
- Your group must have an operational budget of \$40,000 or less.
- Your group must have an all-inclusive membership, i.e., does not exclude people on the basis of gender, race, religious differences, etc.
- Project must not preach specific religious doctrine.

### **Who Can Apply**

- New or existing **all-volunteer** groups located in Greater New Bedford (New Bedford, Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Freetown, Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester, Wareham)
- Groups are defined as having at least 3 members unified by a common cause
- If your group has received Mini Grant funding from United Way of Greater New Bedford for the past three consecutive years (2017-2018; 2018-2019; and 2019-2020) regardless of the type of project, then you are not eligible to apply this year. You will be eligible to apply next year in 2021.
- Annual budget/income of group must not exceed \$40,000
- Legal incorporation 501(c)(3) not required

### **Who Cannot Apply**

- Fraternal organizations, political campaigns or religious activities
- Groups which discriminate
- Any previous recipient that did not adhere to the policy, criteria, terms, conditions and commitments of the United Way of Greater New Bedford Community Building Mini-Grants Program

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Citizens from the Greater New Bedford community review applications. Applicants are evaluated in the following areas:

- Needs Identification
  - The applicant clearly defines a need with supporting evidence.
  - The need is not currently met by other program/service/project.
- Approach
  - The approach will have an impact on the identified need.
  - The key components and activities are essential to the approach.
  - The approach is consistent with the mission of the Community Building Mini-Grants
- Alignment with UWGNB Priorities
  - Proposal addresses how the project will advance one or more of the focus areas noted in this RFP
- Community Engagement
  - The applicant clearly specifies how they will engage the community through this project.
- Collaboration
  - The applicant specifies plans to collaborate to achieve project objectives.
  - The collaboration eliminates or avoids duplication of effort.
  - The collaboration is compelling and innovative.

- The collaboration is cross-sector.
- Timeline
  - The timeline and deliverables are reasonable given the funding amount.
- Budget & Budget Narrative
  - The applicant clearly describes how funding will be utilized over the course of the project.
  - The funding will be used appropriately to achieve the project’s objectives.

**How to Apply**

The applications will be available through United Way’s CommunityForce grant application software. Visit [unitedwayofgnb.communityforce.com](http://unitedwayofgnb.communityforce.com) to create an account or login if you have previously applied for funding through United Way of Greater New Bedford.

For questions, contact Anne Nicholson, Vice President of Community Impact, [anichelson@unitedwayofgnb.org](mailto:anichelson@unitedwayofgnb.org), (508) 994-9625 ext. 215.

**VI. Timeline**

- March 4: Information Sessions
- March 4: Application Opens
- March 13, 11:30am-1:00pm: Grant Support Walk-in Hours at United Way of Greater New Bedford, 128 Union Street, Suite 105, New Bedford
- April 8, 12noon: Application Deadline
- Week of May 18<sup>th</sup>: Award Decision Notification
- June 23, 5:30-7:00pm: Celebration & Networking Event – Waypoint, 185 MacArthur Dr, New Bedford
- July 1, 2020: Funding begins
- May 15, 2021: Funds must be spent or reported as unused to United Way of Greater New Bedford; Final Grant Report due
- June 30, 2021: Funding ends