

F. M. KIRBY FOUNDATION SOLICITATION EVALUATION FORM

DATE: March 28, 2024
Program Area: Human Services
Grant Type: Board Grant

REQUEST DATE: February 28, 2024

APPLICANT:
United Way of Wyoming Valley
100 N. Pennsylvania Avenue, 2nd Floor
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

CONTACT: Mr. William Jones, President and CEO

AMOUNT REQUESTED: \$125,000
BUDGETED AMOUNT: \$100,000

NATURE OF REQUEST: Support of allocations to social service agencies - safety net programs

GRANT HISTORY

SUPPORT: 1975-2023

OF APPROVED GRANTS: 49

TOTAL DOLLARS: \$2,950,500

LAST GRANT DATE: 05/01/2023

LAST GRANT AMOUNT: \$100,000

FYE DATE: 06/30

AFS DATE: 11/10/2023

Year Approved	Approved Amount	Approval Date	Grant Purpose
2023	\$100,000	05/01/2023	Annual allocations to community-based social service agencies and programs
2022	\$100,000	05/02/2022	Annual allocations to community-based social service agencies and programs
2021	\$125,000	05/03/2021	Annual allocations to community-based social service agencies and programs (additional \$25,000 of support is in recognition of the United Way of Wyoming Valley’s Centennial Anniversary)
2020	\$100,000	12/14/2020	Annual allocations to community-based social service agencies and programs
2019	\$90,000	12/16/2019	Annual allocations to community-based social service agencies and programs

LAST SITE VISIT DATE: N/A

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ENDORSEE: N/A

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS COMMENTS: The FY2023 audit is for the fiscal year ending in June 2023. The auditors issued an unqualified opinion for this period. The audit reveals stable assets and a 64% (\$4.2M) increase in revenue and support over the PFY, largely due to an increase in returns on investments (up \$3.2M in total). Net Campaign revenue decreased by 11% (\$329K). Expenses increased by 4% in total for a \$7.7M operating budget. “Community impact grants/awards” decreased by 42% (\$949,075) due to a one-time regranting program UWWV ran for the City of Wilkes-Barre in 2022 which inflated the related revenue and grantmaking line items for that fiscal year. Program services comprised 84% of total operating expenses and personnel expenses comprised 17% of total operating expenses (17 full-time staff), with the Executive Director’s compensation comprising 3% of total expenses and 17% of personnel costs. “Contract services” comprised \$3.36M (44% of the operating budget). I inquired about this line item and Bill sent the following explanation:

The “contract services” refers to funding we receive through the Pennsylvania Department of Health for our HIV program. The \$3.3 million is directly related to the amount of money that we send to the HIV subcontractors... We receive funding from the state, and we fund the subcontractors according to an annual plan and then monitor their performance to ensure individuals with HIV/AIDS receive the services they need.

UWWV held \$16.5M in investments at the time of audit and had a \$13.3M endowment. For FY23, the organization had a surplus of \$2.3M and enough liquid assets to cover approximately 6 months of operating expenses (including community investments). The budget provided projects a total revenue of \$8.2M for FY24 (a 6% increase over FY23 actuals) as well as a 6% increase in expenses. The 2023 F. M. Kirby Foundation grant of \$100,000 covered 1.3% of total expenses for the organization and appears to be the largest grant that UWWV received by quite a margin (we are the only “Ordre de Fraternite” giver of a \$75,000+ grant for 2023). Our budgeted \$100K grant for 2024 would comprise 1% of the total projected revenue for FY24.

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION: The mission of the United Way of Wyoming Valley (UWWV) is to assess, continually, the need for health and human service programs, especially as these relate to childhood poverty; to foster cooperation among local, state, and federal agencies serving the community; and to raise funds among individuals, business enterprises, trusts, and foundations for the benefit of the education and health of children, the financial stability of families, and safety net services for the community.

United Way of Wyoming Valley supports 27 programs across 19 agencies aimed at improving the odds of success for children and families to break the cycle of poverty in our community. In addition to supporting these programs, the United Way has developed 11 signature initiatives and partnerships with 10 local school districts to address underlying challenges that can keep children, especially those in low-income families, from succeeding.

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LIZ CROWLEY COMMENTS: The relationship between the F. M. Kirby Foundation and the United Way of Wyoming Valley spans nearly four decades and several shifts in Wyoming Valley’s economy, population trends, and funding needs. Throughout this time, we have continued to rely on the UWWV’s efficiency, expertise, and capacity to redistribute our grant to the organizations serving the basic needs of residents in this region that we, as a Foundation, cannot connect to individually due to our own capacity. Our funding has supported UWWV’s work to address regional poverty, gaps in educational achievement and literacy, and impediments to equity in healthcare and social services that are amplified by socioeconomic challenges. Last year JFT noted that, out of all three of our United Way partners, UWWV remains the most faithful to the “old-fashioned good neighbor community service organization”, which may reflect the region’s dire need for basic social services that limits UWWV’s ability to innovate in the ways we see at Greater Triangle and in Northern New Jersey. It is heartening to note that UWWV is the fiscal agent of choice for government regrating programs such as the Local Emergency Food and Shelter Board (funded by the federal government) and the HIV Program (funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Health).

Since 2015 UWWV has focused its efforts on childhood poverty in the Greater Wyoming Valley which, at 26%, is well above state and national averages. In 2023, they addressed the systemic effects of childhood poverty on educational achievement by supporting eight after-school programs, homework/academic assistance programs, and early childhood literacy programs in their “education” pillar. Grants in this category ranged from \$30,000-\$75,000. Additionally, one of UWWV’s designated organizations made a \$70,460 grant for a School-Based Community Navigator, who works with families to prevent chronic absenteeism through individualized referrals and support. Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing more than 10% of school days, has become a major problem post-pandemic and results in lost learning that stunts educational achievement. Children living in poverty are two to three times more likely to be chronically absent than those living above the poverty line.

UWWV also addresses the daily concerns of childhood poverty from a “whole-family” perspective via grants to local organizations that support food access, housing retention, mental health/substance abuse treatment, domestic violence, and basic healthcare. These grants ranged from \$6,500 to \$75,000. In total, UWWV provided \$1,091,960 to fund 27 programs at 19 community-based social service agencies. The report notes that UWWV was able to provide every agency with the grant amount for which they applied.

UWWV provided its annual report and a one-page summary of its program numbers from the past year. Most program numbers remain level (accounting for regular fluctuations that are bound to occur year-by-year), with a more notable ~30% dip in “children engaged in reading programs”. I have put together a table of several of the program numbers from the past three years for quick reference:

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Persons receiving access to oral/primary healthcare	3230	3542	3542
Children prepared for kindergarten	243	251	258

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Families received parenting support services	118	135	125
Children engaged in reading programs	9425	10297	7192
Pairs of eyeglasses provided to students	226	400	577
Books distributed to children	29855	40111	46470
Rides Provided to Seniors	664	705	500
Nights of shelter for homeless	5211	5388	4069

Last year we heard about UWWV’s Future Educator Pipeline Program, which focuses on addressing the general teacher shortage in the region as well as the lack of diversity in the local teaching profession. The program is currently in year two of its pilot program with three local school districts that are currently engaging 21 students, while other local school districts have started to introduce initiatives that introduce students to the teaching profession. The program shuttles the students to elementary school classrooms where they act as an aid/assistant for a few hours every day and has attempted to address various barriers to students that may preclude them from participation, including lack of transportation and lack of appropriate attire. As a further incentive, UWWV is working with the districts to explore how the program can qualify for college credits. Going forward, UWWV hopes to hold a one-week summer camp for 20 local students at King’s College that will help the students explore the teaching profession.

The report for 2023 notes that, in response to the effects of the pandemic on childhood literacy and educational achievement, UWWV re-examined its efforts to identify gaps in service. This “Needs Assessment” led UWWV to the conclusion that it needed specific programming focused on supporting parents as they attempt to advocate for their children within the school system. The included additional request for a Parent Support line which hopes to address this issue directly. While I am not inclined to recommend specific support for the Parent Line, which we did not budget for and had not discussed before receiving the application, I am happy to recommend the budgeted \$100,000 and open up the designation so that the grant provides more flexibility. The included proposed budget for the grant proposal includes an allocation of \$20,000 for internal programs (“Specifically, we will use Kirby Support for the growing Nurse’s Pantry program, if awarded”). Again, I am not opposed to the use of 20% of the grant for the Nurse’s Pantry program if that is what is needed, but rather than specifically designate a dollar amount to this program I would recommend providing general operating support, as we do for United Way of Northern New Jersey. After a relationship of nearly 50 years, I feel confident that we can trust UWWV to appropriately allocate these funds.

RECOMMENDATION: I recommend \$100,000 in general operating support.

JUSTIN J. KICZEK COMMENTS: LDC notes the 50 years of recorded support for this particular branch of UWWV, which is astonishing on its own, though FMKF can take pride in the relationship stretching back even further with Fred Morgan Kirby playing a key role in establishing the original Community Welfare Federation of Wilkes-Barre, which was this UWWV’s ancestor, in 1921, marking now more than 100 years of support for the community through this model.

UWWV remains focused on childhood poverty, and the multi-pronged approach here – housing, education, literacy, health, etc. – is a testament to the width and breadth of UWWV’s role in the

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community – as well as the complexities of childhood poverty. Considering UWWV runs several of their own programs, I am in favor of the very good suggestion by LDC to open up their the designation.

A few additional suggestions: last site visit with UWWV was in 2018 so we should try to spend more time with them in either 2024 or 2025. We will obviously be out there in early September. Additionally, it would be great to see if Bill Jones or anyone else from UWWV wants to attend the celebration day at Kirby Park on September 7.

RECOMMENDATION: I recommend \$100,000 in general operating support for this grantee with deep roots in the Foundation's and family's philanthropy.

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DISPOSITION:

- Declination
- Hold for review on/about:
- Approval for: **\$100,000**
- Recommended Grant Payment(s):
2024:
2025:
2026:
- Hold for Board Review: **April 26, 2024**
- Payee Other Than Addressee:
- Insert Information: **General Operating Support**
- Other:

Initials: JK

Date: 04/12/2024

Check # _____

Date: _____