



United Way
of the Tri-Valley Area

COMMUNITY PARTNER ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS AND AGENCY COMPLIANCE

Thank you for your interest in applying for funds from the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area. We find investing in learning more about the wonderful programs you provide to meet critical human needs in our community and hearing the success of your efforts to be an extremely satisfying and rewarding aspect of the United Way's mission.

With increasing need in our community for health and human services and with limited resources available, United Way's Board of Directors must ensure that our Community Investment Allocations are being made as wisely as possible. Additionally, our investors (donors) want to know that we are making the greatest possible impact in the areas of need identified by our community. Therefore, it is important for the United Way to adhere to rigorous standards when determining whether an organization is eligible to be considered a Community Partner and what it means to be a "Partner."

Partner Definitions:

- **Community Partners** are nonprofit human service organizations that apply for and receive funding through the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area's annual Allocation/Community Investment process. Current Community Partners who have received funding for five consecutive years are re-certified annually (staff review documentation provided as part of the Allocation/Community Investment process).
- **Historic Partners** are nonprofit human service organizations that have historically applied for and received funding through the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area's annual Allocation/Community Investment process, continue to remain a viable nonprofit organization, but who no longer apply for funding. Organizations will be considered Historic Partners for five consecutive years.
- **Potential Partners** are those who wish to receive funding in the next funding cycle. They are considered through an initial eligibility application process. (If a Community Partner has not applied in the past five years and chooses to reapply, it reverts to Historic Partner status, and must also go through an initial eligibility process.)

To clarify, if found eligible for that year, AND then funded through the current funding cycle, an agency is considered a Community Partner.

As in the past, prior funding by United Way does not guarantee funding in any subsequent year. This is an annual, competitive process.

Current and potential Partners must meet the following standards:

STANDARDS

1. BE A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION.

Explanation: Agencies receiving United Way dollars must be non-profit organizations that have been declared tax-exempt by the Internal Revenue Service (I.R.S.), have filed I.R.S. Report 990 "Report of Organization Exempt from Income Tax," and have a 501(c)(3) designation. The United Way has the responsibility to verify that the recipient organization has been ruled tax-exempt by the Internal Revenue Service. Applicable documents, such as designation letter, charitable solicitation letter and bylaws, for example will be required for consideration.

2. OFFER HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS.

Explanation: The United Way of the Tri-Valley Area restricts its funding to organizations that offer programs that address human needs.

3. PROVIDE COMMUNITY SERVICE BASED ON DOCUMENTED NEED(S).

Explanation: The agency/program should address an identifiable, current need, or problem in the community. Services which are supported by voluntary dollars should be clearly defined and their impact documented by the organization. There should be no substantial duplication of service. Services should be delivered effectively at a reasonable cost.

4. PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION.

Explanation: Discrimination by race, creed, color, sex, age or religion must be prohibited in programs, services, staffing and volunteer areas. A written affirmative action plan for employment of staff would reinforce compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity Act 1972.

5. HAVE AN ACTIVE, ROTATING, VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP THAT REPRESENTS THE DIVERSE ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY.

Explanation: The agency's Board of Directors or governing body should consist of volunteers who participate in the policy-making process, represent the diverse elements of the community, and periodically rotate off the board and meet, at least quarterly. Members of the volunteer structure should not receive financial remuneration from the program(s) or service(s) they oversee.

6. HAVE SOUND FINANCIAL AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT.

Explanation: Demonstrate ability to manage the programs/services in accordance with generally accepted managing and accounting procedures. The organization should provide a copy of its annual audit using an independent certified public accountant firm, where feasible. Other financial documents, such as financial statements and budgets will be requested.

Eligibility determination does not necessarily result in United Way funding. The amount of available dollars, the urgency of existing needs, and other key variables are important to the United Way citizen review process and the final funding decision. Many United Ways, including the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area, require additional information from agencies as conditions for funding. These conditions are unique to the United Way funding relationship and are included in formalized agreements.

While Community Partners must meet certain legal and financial standards, they must also agree to comply with United Way of the Tri-Valley Area requirements to ensure a strong relationship that benefits both parties:

AGENCY COMPLIANCE

1. SUPPORT/COOPERATE WITH UNITED WAY IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

1. Fundraising, 2. Planning, 3. Communications, 4. Allocations.

Explanation: United Ways' relationships with agencies should be one of partnership rather than one of ownership. This relationship evolves around four primary areas which are: **raising** voluntary contributions, **planning** for the needs of the community, **communicating** their services to the public, and **allocating** the funds through an equitable and effective citizen reviewing process. Board members and agency executives should be willing to carry a responsible share in the annual United Way Campaign to help insure its success. A statement must be signed by agency representatives, which indicates that the agency will abide by the United Way requirements.

2. PROVIDE TIMELY FINANCIAL AND PROGRAM INFORMATION:

Explanation: Community Partners share the responsibility of being accountable to the community for the expenditure of voluntary dollars. Periodic reporting of financial and United Way of the Tri-Valley Area-funded program data to the United Way (operating costs, income and program outcomes, etc.), may be requested. This documents agency expenditures and substantiates their validity. In addition, agencies should conduct an annual internal evaluation of their program.

3. ABIDE BY FUND-RAISING POLICY DURING THE BLACK-OUT PERIOD (SEPT. 1 – DEC. 31):

Explanation: Community Partners may conduct fund-raising activities during the traditional United Way black-out period, however, they may not participate in any other federated workplace campaigns (such as MaineShare) or participate in any direct, systematic solicitation of employees in the workplace. (Black-Out period was revised in 2009 to allow Community Partners to have more flexibility and opportunities to sustain their programs.)

4. RESTRICT SELF-PROMOTION

Explanation: Community Partners should participate fully in the mission of the United Way and equally promote its organization and other Partners during the Campaign. This includes not promoting or advertising or having others promoting or advertising on their behalf in a workplace for the purposes of soliciting designations through the annual United Way of the Tri-Valley Area Campaign. Community Partners are also specifically prohibited from asking or attempting to influence their own employees, directly or indirectly, to designate their gifts to a specific agency, including the Partner agency they work for, during their own workplace campaign. (A comprehensive Donor Choice policy is included with a Community Partner's Letter of Agreement.)