

News Release

January 12, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UNITED WAY OF WHATCOM COUNTY IS LOOKING FOR NEW PROGRAMS TO PARTNER WITH

Bellingham – As part of their efforts to advance Education, Income, and Health for all, United Way of Whatcom County is currently looking for programs and organizations who are working toward the same community-level goals. By opening up their Community Impact Fund and expanding their partners they can more effectively address specific local issues and create measurable change.

Currently United Way of Whatcom County is looking for programs that are increasing early literacy, increasing the graduation rate, increasing financial stability, decreasing homelessness, improving access to crucial health care services, and more. If you have an innovative program based on best practices to achieve results, you could qualify for funding. Interested organizations must fulfill certain criteria and are required to attend the United Way of Whatcom County's Grant Seeker Technical Assistance Meeting at 9:00 am on Friday, January 23 (RSVP required) in order to have the opportunity to apply for funds. The meeting will take place at United Way's new office on the 2nd floor of the Washington Federal Building, corner of Champion and Cornwall. Grants could range anywhere from \$5,000 to \$50,000 depending on the scope and qualification of the program.

United Way's 3 focus areas embody the building blocks of a strong life and of a strong community. With evidence showing the increased connection between good health, educational success, and income level, United Way of Whatcom County sees the value in strengthening these areas for all of us. For example studies show that individuals who graduate from high school are less likely to engage in crime, more likely to be healthy, and have a better chance at earning a living wage. Ensuring that a person graduates involves a variety of support for school programs, partnering with after school programs, working with families to reduce abuse, access to healthy foods, and increased stability. It's these types of programs working to achieve community-wide goals that United Way is looking for.

"It takes a variety of programs and people to move the needle on important community issues. We know that there isn't one program that can do it all which is why we will be working with an assortment of programs using different techniques and different focuses, but ultimately working towards the same goals in our key areas," said Peter Theisen, United Way of Whatcom County President/CEO.

There will be an application process for United Way funds, specific funding priorities, and a focus on programs using evidence-based practices. This will allow United Way to streamline activity in the community and ensure results through shared goals and aligned resources. Working with a variety of partners on the same issues will

create community-wide change and extending funding to more partners, along with working with current partners, will ensure that new or existing programs will have the opportunity to be part of this movement.

By engaging with the community over the past several years and participating in research such as the Community Health Assessment and the Whatcom Prosperity Project, United Way of Whatcom County has developed 3 goals in each of their focus areas and is now looking to work with new partners and programs, as well as long-time partners, that are working specifically on affecting the following goals in Education, Income, and Health:

EDUCATION

- Creating Stable/Healthy Families & Kids
- Achieving School Readiness
- Increasing High School Graduation

INCOME

- Increasing Financial Stability
- Supporting Workforce Preparation
- Increasing Safe & Stable Housing

HEALTH

- Ensuring Healthy & Active Living
- Increasing Health Care Access
- Increased Safety and Abuse Prevention

“We are truly excited at the possibilities for community impact that this direction will facilitate,” said Theisen, “Focusing our efforts on specific goals and aligning with programs that are using evidence-based practices will create a stronger community and ensure a more efficient use of our donor dollars.”

For more information on criteria, or to RSVP for the Grant Seeker Technical Assistance Meeting, call (360)733-8670 or visit www.unitedwaywhatcom.org

About United Way of Whatcom County

United Way of Whatcom County’s mission is to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of our communities to advance the common good. They provide leadership that galvanizes and connects a diverse set of individuals and institutions, and mobilizes human and financial resources, to create long-term social change by advancing Education, Income, and Health for all. United Way of Whatcom County’s goals for the community involve: helping children/youth achieve their potential through academic success, ensuring individuals/families achieve financial stability and economic independence, and building individuals who are healthy and avoid risky behaviors. To learn more about United Way of Whatcom County visit www.unitedwaywhatcom.org or check out their Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/UnitedWayWhatcom>