



WASHTENAW COORDINATED FUNDERS

Frequently Asked Questions 2016-2018 Program Operations Grants

Key points about our Coordinated Funding Program Operations Grants to Date

- The Washtenaw Coordinated Funders (comprised of the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, the City of Ann Arbor, United Way of Washtenaw County, Washtenaw County, Washtenaw Urban County, St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Ann Arbor, and RNR Foundation) are investing \$4.5 million annually over the next two years in health and human services programs in the following priority areas:
 - Aging
 - Cradle to Career: Early Childhood & School-Aged Youth
 - Housing & Homelessness
 - Safety Net Health & Nutrition
- This is a more than \$390,000 annual increase over the last two-year cycle due to grant funding from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund (through the AAACF) and due to the addition of St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Ann Arbor as a Coordinated Funding partner.
- These investments are the result of a rigorous nonprofit- and key stakeholder-driven process addressing immediate community needs through programs that have a proven track record of achieving desired outcomes.
- An inter-organizational team of over 40 volunteers from each Coordinated Funding partner spent over 1,000 hours reviewing Request for Information (RFI) financial and governance data from applicants, reading Request for Proposals (RFP) responses, and ultimately making funding recommendations.
- Some very good programs will not get funded because they did not align with the priority areas and/or program outcomes identified, or simply because there is not enough money to invest adequately in every program requesting funding.
- Applicants will be notified regarding funding recommendations in late April or early May, prior to inclusion in the public funding partner board packets.

Additional Background and Details

How many programs applied for a grant?

The Washtenaw Coordinated Funders received 105 applications from 55 agencies in this grants cycle. A complete list of funded programs will be available on the Washtenaw Coordinated Funder's web site (www.coordinatedfunders.org) in June, once all funding awards have been approved and applicants have been officially notified.

What were the priority areas for funding?

Aging. The goal: To help vulnerable, lower income adults 60 years of age or older live independently and safely through crisis intervention services, increasing access to senior support systems, and decreasing social isolation.

Early Childhood. The goal: To ensure children considered at-risk or with high needs are developmentally ready to succeed when they start school through parent engagement and education, access to high quality early learning, and programs that strengthen young children’s social emotional health.

School-Age Youth. Two goals: (1) To increase high school graduation rates of economically disadvantaged youth through programs that foster literacy and academic success and build 21st century skills. (2) To increase the physical and emotional safety of economically disadvantaged youth in their homes, schools, and communities through programs that provide both in- and out-of-school programming that facilitates youth-adult relationships, social-emotional development, harm reduction, and conflict resolution.

Housing & Homelessness. The goal: To reduce the number of people who are experiencing homelessness through prevention services, emergency shelter, transitional housing and/or homelessness outreach, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing and services.

Safety Net Health & Nutrition. Two goals: (1) To increase access to health services and resources for low-income residents through benefits advocacy, accessing care services, and care coordination. (2) To decrease food insecurity for low-income residents through community-based food access and home-bound food distribution.

How was the funding for priority areas determined?

The funding level for each priority area was determined through a number of factors including: the total requests for funding in each priority area; historic funding levels for each priority area; and emergent community conditions in Washtenaw County (for example, the Community Mental Health funding crisis). Limited monetary resources remain the single largest constraint to funding worthy programs that support our community’s most vulnerable residents.

How much did organizations ask for?

This cycle we received requests for over \$9 million (annual amount), twice as much as was available to invest (\$4.5 million).

How long is the grant cycle?

The grant cycle is two years long. Governing bodies of the Washtenaw Coordinated Funders partner organizations will approve the funding amounts and recommended awards in spring of 2016. The 2016-2018 program operations grants cycle begins July 1, 2016 and continues through June 30, 2018. This two-year period provides agencies with a stable funding commitment and time to implement their program/service, evaluate these interventions, and measure their success.

Is the grant award amount for entire grant cycle?

No, the award amount is what an agency receives for one year. The programs are anticipated to receive the same amount each year during the cycle. Level funding for Coordinated Funding programs in year two is contingent in part on the outcome of annual fundraising efforts and budget processes of the partners.

Will the amount of the grant change over the grant cycle?

Grant awards may be adjusted during the two-year cycle based on available funds.

Who makes the decisions about program grants?

Over forty community volunteers who represent a broad cross-section of Washtenaw County and the funding partners volunteered more than 1,000 hours to review Request for Information (RFI) financial and governance data from applicants as well as read Requests for Proposal (RFP) responses, deliberate and ultimately make funding recommendations. Volunteers were grouped into teams around specific priority areas, so that applications for each priority area were reviewed by the same group of people. Volunteer reviewers were selected by the Coordinated Funding partners and boards based on both interest and experience with human services funding.

Planning and Coordinating Entities (P&Cs) worked with local nonprofit organizations from May to October of 2015, studying community needs and identifying emergent community conditions. Leading up to the grants cycle, in concert with local nonprofit organizations, P&Cs reviewed current program strategies and outcomes and made adjustments based on identified trends and changes in community conditions. The program strategies and outcomes which program operations grants applicants “wrote to” in their applications were driven by the local nonprofit sector. Local nonprofit voice, and the content expertise of P&Cs, is an essential component of the grants process and ensures that limited resources have the greatest impact.

During the grants process, volunteers put in hundreds of additional hours reading and deliberating which programs best align with priorities to achieve the desired outcomes. Their recommendations were reviewed by Coordinated Funding staff, and vetted by a cross-section of volunteers at a final deliberation session. Final funding recommendations are presented to the governing boards of each Washtenaw Coordinated Funding partner for individual organizational review and approval.

Coordinated Funding professional staff—comprised of staff from each of the Washtenaw Coordinated Funders partner organizations—score proposals and heavily support and inform the process. Having decisions made by a broad base of knowledgeable and trained volunteers following consistent guidelines preserves the integrity and objectivity of the process, protects tax payer dollars as well as donor investments, and ensures the best results for the whole community.

Some agencies will receive more than they were awarded during the last grants cycle. Some will receive less. Some were not funded. Why?

Each application is considered individually. Volunteers make recommendations based on: the strength of the proposal, alignment with identified priorities and desired outcomes, quality of measurement plans, and whether the program is the best use of limited resources for the greatest possible impact.

What are the grant requirements for agencies awarded funding?

Those organizations who have been awarded funding are required to submit a mid-year and annual report providing detailed information on the program services provided, individuals served and outcomes achieved with Coordinated Funding dollars. In addition, they must provide us with agency-related documents if requested that include, but are not limited to annual audits, state of Michigan certifications, and board rosters.

What are the factors that affect money available for program operations grants through Coordinated Funding?

Fundraising & Designations: United Way’s capacity to fundraise affects overall resources. A recovering economy also challenges workplace campaigns. Additionally, the amount of United Way’s total campaign that is designated by donors directly to nonprofit agencies versus to its Local Community Fund

affects resources available for investment through Coordinated Funding. Despite these challenges, the United Way has maintained a consistent level of overall fund raising, and is grateful to the community for stepping up in tough times.

Federal Budgets, Regulations & Entitlement Formulas: The Urban County Executive Committee is bound by federal regulation to designate up to 20% of its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to Public (Human) Services programs. Since the start of Coordinated Funding, the UCEC has committed all 20% of its available funding to this community process. The overall allocation of CDBG funding that is allocated to Washtenaw County is dependent upon both federal budgets and the formula used by the Department of Housing & Urban Development.

Local Tax Dollars: Both the City of Ann Arbor & Washtenaw County have numerous mandated and non-mandated services to provide to its citizens. The available tax dollars for investment into human services is dependent upon the political will of elected officials to allocate resources amidst competing priorities. The City and the County have also maintained their respective investments in Coordinated Funding since its inception, despite the economic downturn.

Limited Unrestricted Funds: The AAACF operates most of its investments through donor-advised funds, leaving a much smaller pool of funding available for distribution through the Coordinated Funding process. Despite this limitation, the majority of its available unrestricted funds for health and human services are invested through Coordinated Funding.

Who do we contact if we have additional questions?

Refer questions beyond this level of detail to a Coordinated Funding staff member:

- Andrea Plevak, Human Services Manager, OCED (pleveka@ewashtenaw.org)
- Bridget Healy, Director of Community Impact, United Way of Washtenaw County (bhealy@uwwashtenaw.org)
- Jillian Rosen, Director of Community Investment, Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation (jrosen@aaacf.org)
- Elisabeth Vanderpool, Director of Community Health, St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Ann Arbor (Elisabeth.vanderpool@stjoeshealth.org)