UNITED WAY PARTNERSHIPS
A NEW WAY OF WORKING TOGETHER
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Below are the most frequently asked questions about United Way Partnerships. We have attempted to answer them in as much detail as we can. For many questions, the best answer we can give is that the Partners themselves will make the final decisions. Please keep that in mind as you read through the materials.

GENERAL PARTNERSHIPS QUESTIONS

What are United Way Partnerships?
United Way Partnerships are formal groups of United Ways that are willing to come together to work on key areas of United Way’s business model to resolve performance challenges that currently stall progress. These United Way Partnerships mirror formal partnership collaborations you see locally – a group with a common agenda where partners are mutually accountable, equally investing resources toward common objectives and acting in collaboration based on group decisions.

The new United Way Partnership structure builds off of other highly successful collaborative efforts United Way already has in place, such as United Way Mobilization Groups. The key difference is that the Partnerships are about the collective efforts of a group of United Ways versus the individual capacity building and community impact of mobilization markets.

In addition, an underlying goal is for these early Partnerships to help the United Way network learn how to successfully partner more formally with each other against cross-community issues.

Over time, success of the Partnership model will be instrumental in shifting away from the traditional membership model to a true horizontal network with members leading at the local, state and national levels.

Why are we creating Partnerships?
The primary purpose of creating these Partnerships is to improve our ability to collectively impact and raise resources for our local communities and the nation. United Ways in the Partnerships will benefit from stronger corporate relationships, improved sharing of tools and resources, a stronger public profile and enhanced talent management opportunities. Please keep in mind that this is new work for United Ways; it requires that we look beyond simple ROI calculations to determine the value of our investments.
Ultimately, it is the United Way Partners themselves who are going to determine the value of these Partnerships. The Partners will make the decisions, drive the execution of the work, innovate and share in the risks and the rewards. To achieve our individual and collective goals, we’re required to think differently about how we interact and execute. Partnerships will help us do just that.

**How were the focus areas of the three Partnerships chosen?**

The Partnership focus areas were chosen based on urgency. We are reaching the halfway point on our ten-year Goals for the Common Good for 2018, and the current high school 2018 class is going into middle school. In order to reduce the number of youth who drop out of high school by half, United Ways are going to need to work together to accelerate our impact.

We continue to lose revenue as a network and currently only have relationships with less than 60 percent of Fortune 500 companies in the U.S. In addition, a recent study produced by The TCC Group uncovered increased dissatisfaction in United Way’s relationship management with companies and an inability to meet our customers’ needs with our current mode of operation.

Additionally, we face a dramatic loss of leadership in the United Way network. In the next five years, one-third of United Way CEOs will reach retirement age, and we are not strategically recruiting or retaining enough high-potential talent. Finally, as more United Ways transform into community impact organizations, new competencies are required that the network is not currently set up to support or develop.

**Does this mean United Ways that aren’t working in middle grades and high school need to switch their focus to be in the Graduation Initiative Partnership? Does this mean United Way Worldwide is no longer concerned with early childhood development and education?**

No. United Ways working in the early or later parts of the continuum are invited to join in the Graduation Initiative Partnership if they are looking to expand their focus into middle grades and high school. But if not, there are a few things to keep in mind:

1. The Graduation Initiative Partnership is focused on making progress on our Goal for the Common Good in education, meaning that we have to target the children currently in middle school. The Partnership’s goal is to strengthen United Way’s higher-grade work, building upon the important and great work happening in the early childhood and early grades.

2. The Graduation Initiative Partnership is a starting place for Partnerships – if it is found to be a successful way of working together, more Partnerships will be formed or this one will expand – depending on what the Partners decide to do.

United Way Worldwide is dedicated to supporting a cradle to career education framework. The Graduation Initiative Partnership will focus on making progress in the later part of the continuum in a new way. The work around early grades will continue to be fully supported, and early grade Partnerships may be formed as we see success in the initial Partnerships.
How do the Partnerships work?
Each Partnership will be made up of a series of Compacts – small groups of United Ways working together to solve a specific, performance-based challenge that crosses geographic and service boarders and requires shared action, accountability and performance.
Each Partnership will have a Partnership Leadership Group, comprised of chairs of each Compact, which will support the exchange of information between Compacts, address cross-Compact issues and provide oversight for the Partnership's collective body of work. Additionally, a Cross-Partnership Leadership Group will address issues across Partnerships and guide network-wide decision making on operations and execution against mission.
Decision making guidelines will be determined by each Compact and Partnership, but a simple majority is suggested.

How many United Ways will be in each Partnership and Compact?
The final size will be determined by those who apply, but we expect that each Partnership will have 10-15 United Ways and each Compact will have three – five United Ways.

What is the role of United Way Worldwide in the Partnership work?
United Way Worldwide will play two primary roles in the Partnerships. First, United Way Worldwide will serve as the backbone institution for the partnering work. This will include coordinating the expert consultants, managing the administrative aspects and monitoring the progress of the Partnerships. Second, United Way Worldwide will be an active Partner in each of the Partnerships and many of the Compacts. In these cases, United Way Worldwide will be like every other United Way but bringing a different set of skills and resources.

What is the role of volunteers in the work of the Partnerships?
Each United Way is asked to identify a lead volunteer who will participate as a member of the Partnership. This volunteer will be asked to attend a portion of two of the five Partnering Program meetings. Additional participation will be determined based on the needs and strategies of each Partnership and Compact.

What is the difference between Partnerships and Mobilization Groups?
Partnerships are about collective performance, shared decision making and group capacity building. Mobilization Groups are about building the capacity and impact of individual United Ways.

What happens if I do not join a Partnership?
While all United Ways are invited to join a Partnership, we understand that, due to financial and other reasons, only a small portion of the United Ways will join in the first round. The Partners will be expected to share their learning with the rest of the field as well as make adjustments to the Partnering Program so that it best meets the needs of the network. Additionally, thanks to the new Business Performance Matrix, all United Ways will have the
opportunity to collaborate and learn from one another in new and exciting ways. Over time, however, we do intend for all United Ways to join a Partnership in one form or another and fully embrace the cultural foundation it seeks to instill.

**PARTNERING PROGRAM QUESTIONS**

**What is the difference between the Partnerships and the Partnering Program?**

While United Ways are old hands at local partnerships, Partnering with each other requires new skills and disciplines. The Partnering Program has been built into the first 14 months of each Partnership to increase the likelihood of success by providing coaching and facilitation by Doug Smith, an expert in the partnership field. Doug, a former partner at McKinsey, has extensive experience in corporate and nonprofit partnerships and has successfully facilitated similar programs for other organizations over the last decade. Five in-person meetings and ongoing facilitation and coaching for the individual Partnerships and Compacts are included as part of the program.

**When the Partnership Program ends do the Partnerships end?**

No, the Partnership Program is a program built into United Way Partnerships for the first 14 months to help ensure we all learn how to Partner successfully with the help of seasoned consultants and learning tools. After the 14 months, the Partnerships continue to function until their intended purpose is complete. Members of the Partnerships will be given an opportunity to re-evaluate their involvement after three years.

**FINANCIAL TIME AND INVESTMENTS**

**What is the time investment?**

Partner United Ways will need to invest a level of organizational capacity that is reflective of the specific performance challenge’s level of importance the network and Compact Partners. This will include full participation in the Partnering Program and related work on the Compact performance challenge by the CEO, lead volunteer and lead staff person.

**What is the financial investment and what do I get in return?**

The initial $30,000 investment covers the cost of the 14-month Partnering Program. This includes expert facilitation at five in-person meetings, as well as on-going coaching and facilitation from external experts. United Ways will be responsible for their own travel and lodging expenses. Additional investments will be determined by the Partners.

While Partners will receive tangible benefits from the Partnering Program and related support services, the real value for the Partners are things like the ability to innovate, faster network replication of new practices and approaches, enhanced consistency that will help us secure and grow current funding relationships while bringing new funding relationships to the table, and a stronger national voice.

**When is the initial financial investment due?**

The initial $30,000 investment will need to be paid by the month of August in 2013. For
United Ways with a July 1 fiscal year, the investment can be split into two payments: one before July 1 and one after July 1.

I am a smaller market and can’t afford to be in a Partnership, what are my options?

We certainly understand that the $30,000 initial investment will be too high for some communities. As mentioned throughout, this initial investment is to pay for the Partnering Program. This investment, along with a substantial investment of time, is critical to the success of these three initial Partnerships. United Ways are encouraged to think creatively about ways to secure this funding, including foundation grants and gifts from individuals. Additionally, on a case by case basis, joint applications from 2-4 smaller United Ways will be considered. In these cases, it is critical that the United Ways be represented by the same core team throughout the process and that the representatives are able to speak on behalf of the other entities. United Way Worldwide is also actively seeking outside funding to support the program, but scholarships will not be available for this first round.

Participation in this particular form of Partnership is not the only option for smaller United Ways. United Way Worldwide will be working with state associations on how the lessons of the Partnerships can be applied at the state level against critical state-wide issues. Additionally, the new Business Performance Matrix provides all United Ways with the opportunity to collaborate and learn from one another in new and exciting ways. While not all United Ways will participate in this first round of Partnerships, we do intend for all United Ways to join a Partnership in one form or another and fully embrace the underlying cultural foundation in the years to come.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND DECISION MAKING

Who decides the composition of each Partnership and what are the selection criteria that they will use?

The final decision will be made by the Selection Committee which consists of leadership from the U.S. Taskforce, the United Way U.S.A. President and an additional leader from United Way Worldwide. In the future, these decisions will be made by the Partners themselves with final approval coming from the Cross-Partnership Leadership Group which consists of the chairs of each Partnership, the United Way U.S.A. President and two appointees of the United Way U.S.A. President.

The Selection Committee will look at a variety of factors but the most critical will be commitment to and understanding of the Partnering Process from the organization’s leaders as well as demonstrated capacity to achieve success on the particular issue.

Can I apply for more than one Partnership and more than one Compact?

Absolutely. United Ways can apply for as many Partnerships and Compacts that they have the capacity to support. However, it is critical when applying for multiple Partnerships and Compacts that the lead staff on each be different. Additionally, all members of a Compact and Partnership are expected to be full Partners, so the more Partnerships and Compacts an organization joins, the higher the potential investment in terms of both time and financial resources.
Do I apply as an individual United Way or do I form my Partnership first and then apply?
Applications are for individual United Ways. Once the applications are received, the individual Partnerships and Compacts will be formed.

What is timeframe? When do we need to decide to join a Partnership?
All United Ways are asked to complete a formal application consisting of three key parts: 1) a written description of the organizational commitment to the partnering process; 2) questions related to the specific assets and interests of the United Way; and, 3) an interview with organizational leaders.
Each of the three Partnerships will officially launch in the spring of 2013. All interested United Ways will need to indicate interest by December 31, 2012 and complete an application and interview by February 1, 2013. Final Partnership composition will be announced in early March 2013.

How will we know when, how and if we should join one of the Partnerships?
An invitation to apply for the Partnerships was sent by email to all United Ways on October 11, 2012. The letter of intent to apply is due December 31, 2012 and electronic applications must be submitted by February 1, 2013.
A peer-review Selection Committee will evaluate the applications and select those to join the Partnerships by March 2013. An application and selection process is necessary to ensure Partners have a good understanding of what is expected of them, they can meet the minimum requirements for joining a Partnership, and Partners are put into Compacts of United Ways with similar interests and goals.

Who can I contact for comments and questions?
Sean Garrett by email at sean.garrett@unitedway.org or by phone at: +1 212.251.4029. Also visit UnitedWay.org/ourfuture for more information.