

UNITED WAY OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY AND MERRIMACK VALLEY
FY2011-FY2013 IMPACT PAPER
INCREASING YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

VISION AND GOALS FOR INCREASING YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

UWMBMV's youth impact area's vision is *to empower youth to realize their goals today and prepare them to excel in the 21st century*. Our vision statement specifically addresses the present as well as the future. Priority measures reflect statewide agreement of what youth need to succeed. *We want all youth to be safe from harm, valued and empowered, college and career ready, civically engaged, and have optimal emotional and physical health*. As a primary funder of out-of-school time, UWMBMV continues to focus on ensuring youths' social-emotional needs are met, so that they can succeed in school, work and life. Research from the afterschool, youth development, and educational fields have one common theme - the importance of youth having supportive relationships with caring adults. All agree this is the most critical factor protecting youth from negative outcomes and failure in school, and therefore, continues to be a major theme and a measure in its own right.

To excel in the future, youth must graduate high school with options. The majority (75%) of youth served in partner agencies are elementary and middle school youth, 25% are high school youth. While many agencies see youth year-after-year, we recognize that few are able to track their youth throughout their school years to graduation. However, research has confirmed that early identification of potential problems is available as young as Kindergarten (and even earlier). Many studies have cited grade repetition as a key early warning signal. We have, therefore, chosen to track *youth's annual progression from grade to grade (or to reduce grade repetition)*, as a proxy for graduation, from the out-of-school time agencies applying in our "college and career ready" measure. Our theory is that each of our measures has a critical impact on this outcome and that working together we are equipping youth with the skills needed to succeed in school, work and life.

Keeping pace with today's global economy is a challenge. Employers have identified the skills needed for youth to succeed in a 21st century economy. These go beyond what is learned in school and are frequently the foundation of out-of-school time lessons and experiences. They are represented in ***all*** the IYO measures and we are asking all agencies how they are developing these skills in their youth.

The definition of 21st century skills includes knowledge, skills, and abilities:

- Subject Matter Knowledge (English Language Arts, math, science, foreign language, etc.)
- Specific Vocational Knowledge & Skills
- Learning and Thinking Skills (critical thinking and problem solving skills, communication skills, creativity and innovation skills, collaboration skills, contextual learning skills and information and media literacy)
- Information and Communication Skills (use of technology to learn, think critically, solve problems. Use of information to communicate, innovate and collaborate)
- Life Skills (leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal responsibility and productivity, people skills, self-direction, and social responsibility)
- 21st Century Content (global awareness, cultural competence, civic literacy, financial literacy and wellness awareness)

Our work is guided by and built around a common belief in the following principles which are grounded in solid research, practice and public opinion. These principles were adapted as a result of synthesizing those in the Statewide Plan and updating those identified in the last multi-year process.

What Youth Need To Thrive

- Children grow up in the context of families and communities. In order to change the odds for youth, we need to change the way we do business, and change the landscape of communities. Strengthening family and community supports will lead to improved youth outcomes. Supporting the whole child is critical.
- Positive adult relationships provide youth with the support necessary to succeed. These adults include mentors, program staff, teachers, parents, coaches and other supportive adults.

- All youth need to learn 21st Century skills to thrive. These skills are gained through a focus on academic achievement, exploratory/experiential learning, and alignment with schools – in out-of-school time and summer.
- Youth develop in their own unique ways and therefore need a full range of learning opportunities and experiences to support and influence their growth and well-being.

What UW Values

- Positive youth development engages young people in making important decisions about their own lives, the organizations that serve them, and their communities, and ultimately prevents them from engaging in risky behaviors.
- Positive youth development requires community mobilization. There is a role for everyone: faith-based institutions, policy makers, business leaders, media, schools, parents, youth-serving organizations and neighborhood leaders.
- A strength-based approach to out of school time builds on the assets of youth, caregivers, and communities, and goes beyond problem reduction.
- All youth deserve to be part of programs that act with cultural competence and remove barriers to achievement.
- High quality programs are evidence-based, focused on outcomes/evaluation, and staffed by highly trained professionals.

EVOLUTION OF FY2011 IYO MEASURES

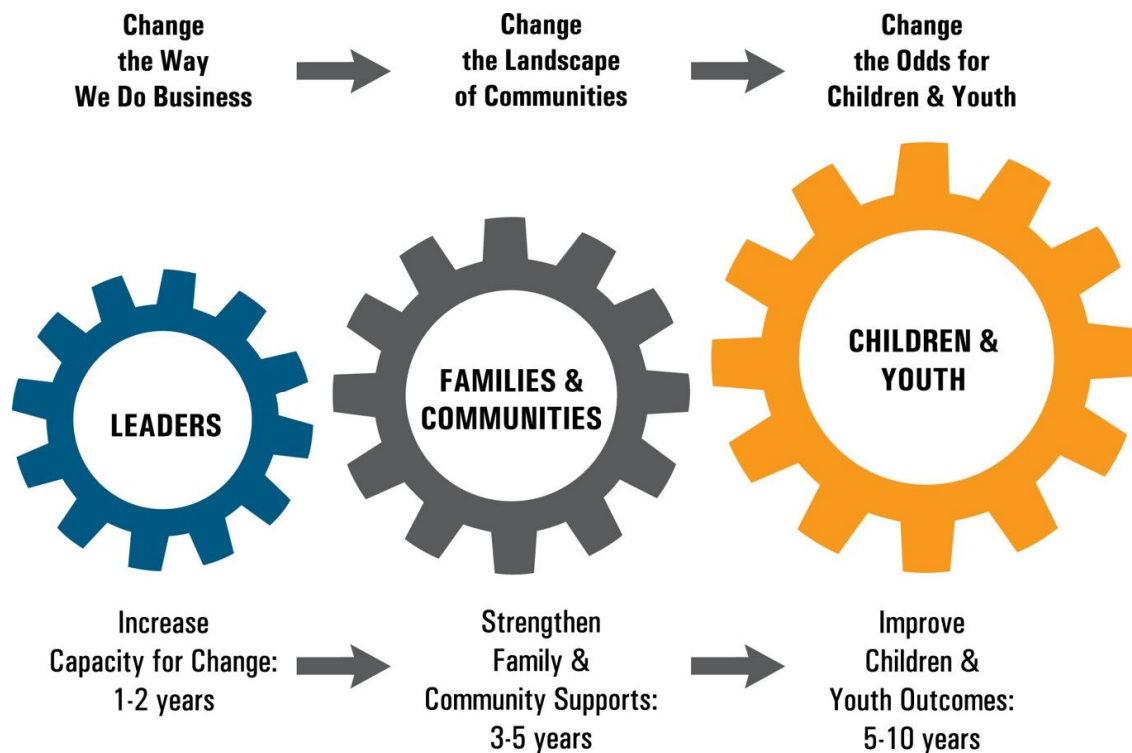
The IYO measures from FY2008-FY2010 focused on building the capacity of agencies, particularly in the areas of using research-based tools, creating effective mentoring opportunities, connecting schools and afterschool, and providing professional development. We introduced performance management and for the first time can report on the collected results of our agencies. The majority of UWMBMV targets have been met! The next cycle will bring the success of agency's capacity-building efforts up a level that focuses on youth outcomes.

Our FY11-FY13 planning has been influenced by the collective work of statewide leaders. In 2009, staff from the UWMBMV and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) hosted a first of its kind public-private statewide planning process with technical assistance from the nationally recognized Forum for Youth Investment. We engaged over 100 leaders including representatives of 14 government agencies, 13 United Ways in Massachusetts, 2 legislative offices and 15 youth. The process also reached another 600 adults and youth through surveys and focus groups. Over 60 diverse coalitions, commissions, and task forces were brought together under one tent to develop a common results framework outlining common indicators to track progress over time and using smart strategies that address multiple indicators at once.

With this plan adopted by Governor Patrick's Readiness Cabinet in June, 2009, our goal is to implement it through a statewide community engagement campaign with the message that ALL have a role in its shared accountability. Therefore, our new generation of outcome measures has been aligned with the Statewide Plan. Your commitment to UWMBMV measures translates to your shared accountability to the statewide plan. In line with the statewide plan, United Way has extended its youth impact area from age 18 to age 21.

FY2011 MEASURES AT-A-GLANCE

To achieve the results that we want for youth, we must recognize and maximize the contributions each segment of society can contribute. Changing the odds for youth requires leaders to change the way they do business and families and communities to strengthen supports for youth. The IYO measures, like the statewide plan, address all three gears of the Forum for Youth Investment's framework below:



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Youth Outcome Measures:

- Youth feel valued and empowered through supportive mentoring relationships.
- Youth are civically engaged and demonstrate leadership.
- Youth avoid or reduce high-risk behaviors.
- Youth are college and/or work ready.

Family/Caregivers Outcome Measure:

- Families/caregivers are engaged in their children’s learning & development.

Public Policy & Leader Outcome Measure:

- Leaders advocate for systemic policy changes. Statewide public policies, practices and budget items will be enacted, implemented and enforced, thereby helping to ensure that youth will be college and work ready.

In addition to these outcome measures, the Youth application asks for a report of total unduplicated youth expected to be served in FY2011 ages 6 to 21. United Way values the overall breadth and depth of services provided to youth through our affiliate’s high quality youth-serving programs and therefore will consider total youth served in its development of a funding model. If the agency serves “some” older youth in these programs, you may include them in the count without having to split programs between impact areas.

The statewide plan calls on all stakeholders to share responsibility and accountability for results. UWMBMV is in a unique position to lead the way by engaging affiliate and funded agencies, donors and business leaders, and other partners in a campaign to move the needle on multiple indicators of youth well-being in order to track our collective progress against these measures.

SPECIFIC FY2011 RFP MEASURES FOR INCREASING YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

A. MENTORING

Outcome Statement: Youth will feel valued and empowered through supportive mentoring relationships

RATIONALE

UWMBMV believes that all young people deserve to have supportive relationships in their lives. Youth who are surrounded by caring adults are less likely to engage in risky behaviors and are more likely to have a positive view of themselves and their community, a necessary ingredient for success in school and in life. United Way wants to work towards ensuring that those youth most in need have the additional support of non-parental adults. We recognize that caring adults can be found among community volunteers and within staff at youth-serving agencies. Whether volunteer mentors or intentional staff mentors are engaged with youth, the key to success is consistency and duration over time.

United Way also acknowledges the growing research on youth cross-age peer mentoring. These programs, in which older youth befriend and mentor younger children in a structured environment, can produce a number of positive outcomes, growth, and learning opportunities for *both* sets of participants. Research shows positive peer relationships lead to cognitive and social development, achievement in school, formation of good social relations, and personal sense of well-being.¹

For these reasons, United Way has expanded its definition of mentoring to include:

- 1. Traditional volunteer adult mentoring**
- 2. Intentional staff mentoring**

United Way will notify agencies of available training to develop, supervise and sustain high quality mentoring relationships. Agencies will be held to the nationally accepted standards, outlined in the “Elements of Effective Practice” by MENTOR/The National Mentoring Partnership at: www.mentoring.org/program_staff/design/elements_of_effective_practice.php.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Mentoring is a structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee. In the book *Stand by Me*, Dr. Jean Rhodes, a leading researcher in the mentoring field, writes that mentors influence young people in three important ways: enhancing social skills/emotional well-being, improving cognitive skills through dialogue and listening, and serving as a role model and advocate.

Rhodes’ article titled “*What Makes Mentoring Work?*” describes four program practices that are essential for strong and effective mentoring relationships. Those practices are:

- Conducting reasonably intensive screening of potential mentors;
- Making matches based on interests that both the mentor and the mentee share;
- Providing more than six hours of training for mentors; and
- Offering post-match training and support.

In addition, United Way has found that having a targeted recruitment plan is an essential program practice. Examples of plans will be listed on our United Way website.

1. ADULT MENTOR-MENTEE PROGRAMS

United Way wants programs to link children who are at risk of negative outcomes and are identified in need of a non-parental, caring adult with a community volunteer, or intentional staff mentor. We will count such links occurring either through 1) establishing a time within your regular program time to include an individual or group

¹ (Cole, S., Lightfoot, C., *The Development of Children*. Macmillan, 2004, p. 549)

structured adult mentoring component; 2) by adding a youth mentoring component separate from the regular program (i.e. after hours or entirely separate program); or 3) referrals and follow-up with already established mentoring programs (if capacity exists within these programs).

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT MENTOR-MENTEE PROGRAMS:

- **ONE-TO-ONE MENTORING** relationships must have consistent face-to-face interaction between one adult and one child for a minimum of four hours per month for at least one year (or school year, if so structured), in the community, or at the agency. E-mentoring qualifies for youth who can not participate in a traditional 1:1 or group program due to circumstances that limit their ability to meet in traditional settings. E-mentoring can also be an added component to an in person program.
- **GROUP AND TEAM MENTORING** programs generally assign one or more mentors to work with several mentees.

DEFINITIONS:

Group Mentoring Definition: One adult is matched with no more than four youth. Some group programs match multiple youth with one mentor, but the mentor meets with each youth individually.

Team Mentoring Definition: Several adults are matched with several youth with a ratio no greater than one to four.

- In group and team mentoring, consistent face-to-face interactions with a group of children should be for a minimum of four hours per month, for at least one year.
- If the mentoring program is *school-based*, matches must meet on a weekly-basis throughout the school year.
- Mentoring programs (individual or group) must have mentor screening, orientation/pre-match training, and ongoing support and training.
- The primary focal point of mentoring must be on intentional development of a child's social and emotional well-being. A secondary focus may involve academic, social, athletic or employment based activities, but this will not be the primary measure of importance.

2. INTENTIONAL STAFF MENTORING

Intentional Staff Mentoring transforms the way staff views their role in a young person's life. Staff mentors are held to the same standards as adult volunteer mentors (see above), and therefore need similar, specific support in order to engage in a high-quality mentoring relationship. Time spent mentoring youth (at least 4 hours per month) must be directed and focused into either a one-to-one relationship or a group relationship. Staff must set aside time for mentoring separate from the general programmatic responsibilities. It is recommended that staff members who supervise young people in an employment capacity or on specific projects should not mentor those same youth through intentional mentoring. We highly encourage staff to participate in United Way's Intentional Mentoring training or attend trainings offered through the Mass Mentoring Partnership.

HOW UWMBMV WILL TRACK SUCCESS FOR THIS MEASURE

To measure our success, UWMBMV will track:

- **Total number of youth matched with a mentor (total matched any year but existing at end of year etc.)**
 - **Of these, the number of which reached one or more year anniversary with same mentor**
 - **Of these, the number of those who perceive support from their mentors**

Agencies will be required to use research-based tools to measure this outcome. This outcome may be evaluated through mentee or mentor pre- and post-tests. There are many research-based tools available that measure perceived support from a mentor. If you currently use a tool, please list the name. If you don't, you will be required to research and choose a tool, with UW assistance if needed, by the first mid-year report.

Here are a few examples of research-based tools. It is important that you choose a tool that fits the needs of your program and your matches.

Dr. Jean Rhodes created the “Gauging the Effectiveness of Youth Mentoring Questionnaire” to measure match effectiveness for one-on-one mentoring programs. It is targeted to the mentee and can be downloaded at http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_622.doc.

The Search Institute has published a workbook that guides programs in evaluating matches called, “What’s Working: Tools for Evaluating your Mentoring Program”, 2001. It includes surveys for mentors and mentees, both of which contain constructs on perceived support. For a free download of the workbook go to: <http://www.search-institute.org/whats-working-tools-evaluating-your-mentoring-program>.

Applied Research Consulting offers the Match Characteristics Questionnaire (targeted at the mentor) and Youth Mentoring Survey (targeted at the mentee). These are two of the strongest, most comprehensive surveys available for measuring relationship quality and have subscales focused on “internal relationship quality” which measures perceived support among other things. They can be integrated into existing match supervision activities. To learn more and request permission to use the surveys, go to [http://www.mentoringevaluation.com/Tools.htm#Match%20Characteristics%20Questionnaire%20\(MCQ\)](http://www.mentoringevaluation.com/Tools.htm#Match%20Characteristics%20Questionnaire%20(MCQ)).

Public/Private Ventures published “Measuring the Quality of Mentor-Youth Relationship: a tool for mentoring programs” in 2002. The publication includes a mentee-focused survey that measures youth-centered relationship, youth’s emotional engagement, and youth’s dissatisfaction. To download this document, go to <http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/packeight.pdf>.

B. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Outcome Statement: Youth will be civically engaged and demonstrate leadership.

RATIONALE

Issues of race and class divide our communities and are primary reasons that many young people do not thrive. Many continue to struggle with issues of identity, the trivialization of their leadership skills, and social expectations that limit their options and opportunities. UWMBMV believes that **youth civic engagement** can counteract divisions in our community by offering young people relationships, networks, challenges, and opportunities – many of the fundamental ingredients of positive development. The 2007 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey included participation in volunteer work or community service and participation in organized extracurricular activities as one of several measures of potential protective factors among students.

We believe that:

- Youth civic engagement recognizes youth as valued resources with unique insights and perspectives on community problems.
- Youth civic engagement challenges youth to contribute and also nurtures social connections.
- Youth civic engagement is not an isolated effort; rather it is a long-term vision of a community that fully integrates young people into its civic life.²

Unfortunately, young adults—especially those who are not college-bound—are less likely today than they were in the 1970s to be connected to a wide range of institutions, including churches, voluntary associations, unions, and political parties. The decline in the civic engagement of non-college youth must also be tied to this decline in institutional connections. A 2005 Kids Count/PRB/Child Trends Report presented some sobering statistics about the growing numbers of 18- to 24-year-olds who are disconnected from society and its institutions.³

² Coalition for Community Foundations for Youth

³ Child Trends Datatbank

- Students who plan to complete four years of college are significantly more likely to participate in volunteer activities at least once a month than are their peers who do not plan to complete college, a discrepancy that increases with age.⁴
- Adolescents who are involved in community service or who volunteer in political activities have been found more likely to have a strong work ethic as adults and are more likely to volunteer and vote in the future.¹ Youth who volunteer are less likely to become pregnant or to use drugs. Volunteering in adolescence is also related to overall positive academic, psychological, and occupational outcomes.⁵
- Youth who plan to complete college are much more likely to volunteer at least once a month compared with other youth. Among twelfth graders in 2006, 37 percent of those who planned to complete four years of college volunteered, compared with 21 percent of those without such plans.⁶

The National Network for Youth characterizes community youth civic engagement as "working in partnership with young people to strengthen or regain their ties to community - whether it be family, neighborhood, schools or friends -- and working with communities to value and support youth." This clearly goes beyond a prevention model that sees youth as problems and defines outcomes in negatives - not getting pregnant, not using drugs, not dropping out of school, not committing crime - to one that appreciates youth as producers, contributors, creators, and leaders.⁷

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Youth benefit from opportunities to interact with adults outside of their family, develop their own voice and connections to their community, and feel empowered to make a difference. Research has demonstrated that when youth are introduced to quality volunteer opportunities, the likelihood that they will engage in risky behaviors decreases and their level of social trust increases. We want to ensure that youth⁸:

- Have a sense of stake, ownership, and enfranchisement in their community and in the larger society
- Contribute to community and institutional change at the policy level
- Have the skills, tools, networks, and supports they need to work together effectively
- Contribute to a culture of respect, partnership, and shared responsibility between youth and adults
- Are promoted to positions of authority and responsibility and involved in decision-making processes
- Are encouraged to work with other young people from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and areas of their community⁹

Civic engagement transcends volunteerism. While youth volunteerism is on the rise, young people, as a group, have become more and more disengaged. Some postulate that the person-to-person nature of most youth volunteerism, while valuable, lacks connection to the larger society. In contrast, youth civic engagement links youth to broader communal or societal goals and, in so doing, develops a sense of stake and ownership.¹⁰

Youth civic engagement as a youth development strategy is still in its formative stages. Examples abound, but many should be viewed as evolving strategies. Some include:

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- **youth organizing, youth advocacy, public work, social change** -- young people identify issues of importance to them and their communities, research and analyze the causes, issues and solutions, and develop and carry out action plans to effect social change;
- **youth court, peer court** -- an alternative form of juvenile justice, employing positive peer influence as well as accountability, in which young people hold positions of authority;

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Coalition for Community Foundation for Youth

⁸ Youth Helping America

⁹ Coalition for Community Foundation for Youth

¹⁰ Ibid

- **youth media** -- through print, broadcast, or electronic media, young people have a significant voice in the world; and
- **youth in philanthropy** -- at its best, engages young people in grantmaking that is intentional in its social change outcomes and, by funding only projects conceived, planned and carried out by young people, influences how institutions in the community view the role of youth.

YOUTH IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

- **Youth in Leadership** positions such as **youth in governance, youth leadership** -- young people and adults share authentic governance responsibilities on nonprofit and public boards
- **Youth in Entrepreneurship** and/or taking the lead in a project with clear outcomes.

Agencies eligible for this measure must have programs where youth complete at **least 20 hours** of community service or youth leadership over the course of one year. The primary focus of the program must be community service, youth leadership, or more broadly civic engagement. Gaining work experience may be a secondary focus, but this may not be the primary measure of importance. (If the primary focus is gaining work experience, please consider applying in the College and Work Ready measure.). In addition, agencies will need to commit to using a research-based tool to track youth outcomes of civic engagement. In the end of year report, agencies will be required to submit examples of projects completed by youth.

HOW UWMBMV WILL TRACK SUCCESS FOR THIS MEASURE

To measure our progress, UWMBMV will track:

- **Total unduplicated number of youth participating in community service, social entrepreneurship/ youth venture or youth leadership positions during the past year.**
 - **Of these, the total unduplicated number of youth participating in at least 20 hours of community service, social entrepreneurship/ youth venture or youth leadership positions during the past year.**
 - **Of these, the number of which *perceive to be more connected to their community***
- * Agencies must use a youth survey, research-based tool to track this outcome. For those programs that do not currently have an approved tool (consult UW staff), United Way suggests using the “*Civic Responsibility Survey for K-12 Students Engaged in Service-Learning.*” http://cart.rmcdenver.com/instruments/civic_responsibility.pdf
- **Total unduplicated number of youth who were active in positions of leadership within program/community (boards, councils, etc.) Our definition of “active” is attendance at over 75% of the meetings required of the position.**

C. POSITIVE BEHAVIORS

Outcome statement: Youth will avoid or reduce high-risk behaviors.

RATIONALE

A critical focus of this measure is on the *target population* of youth experiencing trauma. UW is increasing its intentionality of service delivery to youth with identified predispositions towards high-risk behaviors and youth that are already in crisis. Only agencies with programs specifically designed for this high-risk population and with deliberate outreach or agencies with intake criteria for participation will be eligible. Our goal is to ensure that youth are equipped with the skills necessary to avoid or reduce high risk behaviors.

United Way’s definition of “*high-risk*” is youth who:

- are court involved or adjudicated;
- are pregnant or parenting;
- are gang-involved;
- have a history of chronic violence;

- are chronic substance abusers;
- are victims of domestic abuse;
- are victims of school or community violence;
- are clinically depressed or have a mental health condition/illness
- are chronically mobile (i.e. homeless, youth aging out of foster care, etc.)

Youth's *failure in school*, another UW-identified high-risk factor, is addressed in our "Academic support" measure. Services for parent/caregiver mental health well-being are addressed in our IYO family measure.

Programs eligible should seek to enroll youth at the greatest risk of becoming or involved in negative, risky and or delinquent behavior. Risk behaviors begin well before high school. It is clear that adolescents are engaging in risky behaviors well before they reach the 9th grade. In 2007, middle school students reported use and experimentation with tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs at an alarming rate. Middle school students were also likely to report initiating fighting and bullying, attempting suicide, and hurting themselves on purpose¹¹

We are also seeing growing signs of concern regarding the prevalence of high risk behavior among Massachusetts high school students. A 2007 survey of high school youth behaviors reports 22% of youth were bullied at school, 28% were involved in a fight in the past year, 45% of youth felt the need to talk to someone other than a family member regarding their feelings, and 24% felt sad or depressed for at least two weeks.¹² In addition, 28% of high school students report binge drinking, 25% have used marijuana in the past month, 15% carried a weapon in the past month, 9% are members of gangs, 24% felt so sad or hopeless for 2+ weeks that they stopped normal activities, 8% attempted suicide, and 11% witnessed family violence.¹³

During adolescence, youth are often in the position when they must decide whether or not to experiment in high risk behaviors connected to delinquency. Attention to the cultivation of a young person's self esteem and emerging identity, basic decision-making skills, perceived safety and acceptance from peers and adults greatly contributes to a young person's developmental well-being and ability to reduce and or avoid behaviors that put them at risk and in potential jeopardy of delinquency.

In a meta-analysis of many studies, "high risk peer group" and "high risk social behavior" was frequently cited as significant risk factors related to school dropout, especially at the middle school level.¹⁴ "In school behavior" items, "misbehavior" and "early aggression," were found to be significant risk factors at all three levels of school-elementary, middle and high school.¹⁵

The correlation between academic success and social-emotional well-being is clear. Youth who are experiencing or have demonstrated a propensity to engage in high risk behavior, particularly involvement in the criminal justice system, teen parenting and high risk behavior associated with poor socialization skills, are statistically less likely to graduate, enroll in post secondary education and experience success as adults.¹⁶ Our goal is to intervene early and re-direct or provide the professional help that is necessary to get back on track.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

UW is interested in agencies offering specific stand-alone (requiring separate enrollment) programs that have a well defined, evidence-based methodology/model/curricula or similarly intentional approach or programs providing clinical and/or case management approaches with wraparound services and referral follow-up.

¹¹ Health and Behavior Risk Behaviors of Mass. Youth: 2007 Report; www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/hprograms/yrbs

¹² *ibid*

¹³ Health and Behavior Risk Behaviors of Mass. Youth: 2007 Report; www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/hprograms/yrbs

¹⁴ Dropout Risk Factors and Exemplary Programs, National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, May 2007

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ The Status of Teens and Young Adults (16-24 year olds) in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Implications for the State and local Youth Development Systems, Commonwealth Corporation and the center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, Boston MA, April 2009

Programs must focus on issues or topics related to specific behaviors, trauma, mental health issues and lack of family support. Gender-specific programs that meet the criteria will be eligible. Programs must provide specific skill-building activities that lead to resiliency, coping skills, positive decision-making and problem-solving. The goal of these programs must be to measure increased knowledge and skills to make better decisions and increased functioning leading to avoidance or reduction of high-risk behaviors.

Examples of eligible evidence-based models include programs requiring staff training and program protocols such as adolescent transition programs and the use of curricula around topics such as: conflict mediation and resolution, tobacco/alcohol/substance abuse education, sexual health education, violence and abuse prevention, anti-bullying, gang resistance and mediation, coping with trauma and building resiliency, depression, anxiety and suicide prevention. Agencies will need to provide evidence that the dosage of the program is large enough to achieve the results. Other examples of agency program types that would fit our guidelines for intervention include individual and group counseling, mental health services, case management, and re-entry services.

The application review will consider the narrative explanation of how youth are targeted to participate and how the agency conducts outreach and markets to the relevant population. We will also consider the intentionality of the curricula or approach and the basis for measuring improvement in decision-making and improved functioning skills.

We are **not** looking for general prevention-oriented programs aimed at the general population such as those provided to all youth in schools, expanded hours, “safe havens” or “drop-in” programs. This measure should **not** include brief services such as screening for brief intervention, referral, and outsourced/ external services.

Eligibility for this measure includes the use of appropriate measurement tool(s) to track youths’ progress demonstrating improved decision-making skills and functioning leading to reduced high-risk behaviors. Many evidence-based curricula adopted for use by agencies include pre-and post- surveys to measure success. Agencies with clinical services use youth self-concept scales, adolescent functional assessment scales, protective factors scales, or other similar tools. Agencies must have formalized systems for tracking outcomes. Eligibility will include a review of the agency’s outcomes measurement.

HOW UWMBMV WILL TRACK SUCCESS FOR THIS MEASURE

To measure our progress, UWMBMV will count the following:

- **The total unduplicated number of youth served.**
 - **Of these, the number of youth who demonstrate improved decision-making skills or functioning which lead to reduced high-risk behaviors.**

D. COLLEGE AND/OR WORK READY

Outcome Statement: Youth will be ready for college and/or work.

RATIONALE

Youth being ready for college, work and life is not an outcome that is solely dependent on the success of youth-serving agencies, nor is it solely the responsibility of our schools or parents. United Way understands that affiliated agencies, while tracking this outcome, should not bear the entire burden of its results. We do, however, maintain that the services we, collectively, provide have a tremendous influence on the youth served and their ability to achieve a level of success hopefully greater than that of their peers that are not involved. We are also cognizant of the tremendous communication power to donors, legislators and key decision-makers of the success of your youth progressing through school towards graduation and/or work. Obviously, there are many critical interim milestones that are the everyday outcomes and moving targets of your work. Therefore, the application will include a narrative section for your organization to explain these related accomplishments.

As a societal outcome, we all share accountability for our youths’ success in school, work, and life. However, keeping pace in today’s global economy is a challenge. The demand for workers with college degrees has grown

and it is no longer enough to have just a high school diploma. The largest drop in the labor market has been for high school graduates and high school dropouts, and the challenges are most acute in the state's large urban centers.¹⁷

Overall, Massachusetts consistently ranks high among states that provide positive opportunities for youth. However, across Massachusetts, too many children and youth suffer from persistent challenges and disparities. When we look below the headlines, there are significant differences in the level of academic achievement by socio-economic status, gender, race, geography and among special population groups. Graduation rates in wealthier suburbs reached nearly 97%, while it was just 50% in many lower-income, urban communities. Black and Latino youth, particularly males, significantly lag behind their White and Asian peers on numerous educational indicators. And youth in special education, English Language Learners, homeless youth, and youth with high mobility rates suffer compared to their peers.

Dropouts are less likely to work as young adults and over the course of their lives. Only 20% of 16-19 year old dropouts in Boston worked in 2004-2005, compared with 65% of high school graduates not attending school and 83% of Bachelor degree holders.¹⁸ The long-term effect is that the average dropout earns considerably less over a life-time and spends longer periods of time in poverty.¹⁹ Without interventions, the future economic prospects for these vulnerable youth are grim.

Measuring high school graduation at the community, state and national level has consistently been a major indicator of our success as a society. United Way is just as concerned with early identification and remediation for *ALL* youth of ages 6-21. Of United Way affiliates tracking this information, it is estimated that 20% of youth served are currently failing in school. Our goal is for *ALL* youth in agency programs to find age-appropriate success in academic and/or work readiness, particularly as it relates to interim outcomes and the goal of annual grade promotion and/or work experience.

Chronic absence, course failure, and grade repetition are among the key early warning signals of school failure. Numerous studies have shown that these signs are apparent as early as Kindergarten, sometimes even earlier. Transitions are the most vulnerable times for youth. Problems start in elementary school with chronic absences between Kindergarten and 3rd grade to not reading at grade level by 4th grade. Researchers have found that 6th graders failing math and English, with attendance less than 80%, and at least one poor behavior mark carried a 75% chance of drop out.²⁰ The 2008 Parthenon Group's study of Boston Public Schools found that 75% of dropouts could be identified in the 8th and 9th grades with multiple core course failures, attendance less than 80%, two or more years overage, English Language Learners entering BPS in high school, and/or substantially separate special education students (grades 9-12).

As United Way focuses on the importance of interim milestones and annual grade promotion, the transition between middle and high school is, again, significant. Thirty percent (30%) of all grade retentions (1st grade through 12th grade) happen at 9th grade. The statewide retention average jumps from 2.5% to 7.9%.

In the past United Way's focus has been on increasing the connection between afterschool agencies and schools, ultimately to improve individual youth outcomes as it relates to success in school. We have seen significant success in agency capacity. For example, nearly 90% of "connecting" program sites have designated staff that are regularly communicating with classroom teachers and 70% of programs have consistent "in-school time" each week. We are now interested in seeing the benefits of this work on the youth themselves.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

This measure is about helping youth to be engaged in learning, whether it's academic or experiential, and providing/linking them to the support they need to achieve their individual learning and/or work readiness goals.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ ¹⁸ An Assessment of the Labor Market, Income, Health, Social, Civic, and Fiscal Consequences of Dropping Out of High School: Findings for Massachusetts Adults in the 21st Century. Report prepared for the Boston Youth Transitions Task Force and Boston Private Industry Council. January 2007

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ (Neild, Early Warning Indicators in the Middle Grades and Beyond, presentation, April, 2008)

UWMBMV will support agencies with proven track records and capacity to serve the educational and employment needs of youth and provide them with the building blocks they need to progress from grade to grade and to be prepared for college and/or the workforce. UW values quality program services that demonstrate intentionality and effectiveness, and are staffed with professionals who have the cultural competency and abilities to inspire youth and work with students with different learning styles.

United Way also values programs that seek to engage parents and families and forge collaborative partnerships with the community based youth serving organizations, as well as the business and higher education communities in the design and development of the academic and/or work readiness training programs. We are particularly interested in academic support and work readiness training programs with a focus on integrating the 21st century skill sets into their curricula, program activities and service components. (see definition on page 1)

Since UW's definition of "youth" has expanded to ages 6-21, as such, there will be some age and outcome overlaps between IYO's College and Work Ready measure and the Family Financial Stability's (FFS) Gaining Basic Skills and Job Skills and Gaining Employment measures. If a program is focused on training (with employment placement)/education for youth with a minority of 18-24 yr. olds securing permanent job opportunities, then they should apply in youth. If a program provides job training and education with a substantial number of 18-24 yr olds placed in permanent job opportunities, then they should apply in Families.

For example, if you have a transitional employment program targeting disconnected youth (18-24), applying to the IYO work readiness measure would be more appropriate as the nature of transitional employment is temporary and the earnings are subsidized. Whereas if you have a job training program that provides intensive occupational specific skills training and places participants into permanent full time jobs with a living wage and benefits, applying to FFS's Gaining Job Skills and Gaining Employment measures would be a better fit.

Our goal is to avoid agencies having to split programs between two impact areas. Agencies should consult their relationship manager with questions.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMS (INCLUDING HOMEWORK HELP)

Nearly all afterschool programs have dedicated homework time when youth are getting formal or informal tutoring and assistance to address core subject matter expertise. Other 21st century skills are fundamental objectives of afterschool enrichment and project-based learning, particularly those activities connected to the Massachusetts Standards.

While it is nearly impossible for agencies to track the progress of all their individual youth to graduation, UW agencies can start early and identify youth that are most at risk of not succeeding. This measure uses **grade promotion/retention** as a proxy for annual success in school. Our goal is to reduce/eliminate the number of youth attending UW funded agencies that are being held back in school. In addition, most UW agencies are measuring many 21st century skills and interim outcomes. United Way will continue to require the use of these tools. Interim outcomes (milestones or benchmarks) achieved by youth in your program will be reported in the application so that we understand the bigger picture of your work and how you get there. For youth not enrolled in school but attending alternative education programs, progress will be assessed as improved basic skills or demonstrated progress toward a high school credential.

WORK READINESS PROGRAMS

Adolescence is a period of transitioning from the carefree world of childhood into the adult world of responsibility. Employment during this developmental stage helps teens achieve increased social, emotional, and financial independence from their parents. Nearly two thirds of today's high school students hold a part-time job. The benefits for youth include the opportunity to obtain valuable work experiences, learn time management skills, form good work habits, and learn how to effectively manage finances.

Balancing work and school is important. Research has shown that the negative effects of employment are linked to how often and how long a student works. The more hours teens work, the more prone they are to negative impacts

on their academic success such as absenteeism, less time for homework, lower grades, and less academic effort. Therefore, it is recommended that youth in school work no more than 15-20 hours a week during the school year. Information on Legal Work Hours for Teens and safety rules can be found on the Attorney General's website.

While we recommend that youth should not work more than 15-20 hours during school year, we understand that there are older youth who need to work more than the recommended hours or year round in order to support themselves and their families. We will take this reality into consideration when reviewing the application. However, we will want to know how the youth will be supported to achieve healthy work/life balance and to pursue educational and career advancement opportunities.

For this measure, we are interested in tracking the outcome of youth **gaining work experience**. Again, the interim outcomes (milestones and benchmarks) of gaining work readiness skills will be reported on as part of the application to get a fuller picture of your work.

HOW UWMBMV WILL TRACK SUCCESS FOR THIS MEASURE

1. ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMS (INCLUDING HOMEWORK HELP)

Agencies eligible for this measure will be those that have an intentional approach to increasing academic success among the youth they serve. UWMBMV is not prescriptive about the methodology, but will evaluate the application based on the agency's intentionality and approach.

For youth enrolled in school:

This measure is applicable to any out-of-school time program that has youth enrolled in school and considers academic success as part of its mission, especially afterschool enrichment programs, tutoring, and other academic intervention programs. Alternative education programs that are school-based (track grade promotion) can apply in this area. To be eligible, an agency must be committed to and have the capacity to track grade promotion and retention of *all* students at the end of the school year. Our goal is to reduce the number of youth being held back from year to year.

To measure our progress, UWMBMV will track the following:

- **At the end of the school year, total unduplicated number of youth enrolled in school participating in academic support programs.**
 - **Of these, the number of youth who will be held back in the same grade**
 - **Of these, the number of youth who will progress to the next grade.**

For youth enrolled in non-school based alternative education programs:

This measure is most applicable to older youth who have dropped out from school. These programs might include English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), Alternative Education Programs, credit recovery programs, and General Educational Development (GED).

To measure our progress, UWMBMV will track the following:

- **Total unduplicated number of youth participating in alternative education programs.**
 - **Of these, the total unduplicated number of youth moving towards a high school credential which have gained at least one of the following definitions of competency/skill achievements within the past year:**
 - **gained two or more levels of TABE or SPL; or**
 - **passed 10th grade MCAS; or**
 - **achieved credit recovery to meet grade promotion or graduation requirements; or**
 - **passed at least 2 of 5 GED areas .**

NOTE: In the RFP, under this measure in question #5, include the separate numbers of youth achieving each of the relevant above interim outcomes in the logic model template.

- **Of these, the number of youth who obtained a high school credential**

2. WORK READINESS PROGRAMS

UWMBMV will support work readiness/workforce development programs that have paid or unpaid work experience as the goal. We have defined work experience as successfully completed paid or unpaid internship or apprenticeship, summer or year-round employment. This may also include “transitional employment,” a strategy combining time-limited wage-paying jobs with skill development and supportive coaching/mentoring services. Most programs eligible for this measure will also address essential readiness skills such as: aptitudes and career interest assessments, career exploration, resume writing, mock interviews and career mentoring. Agencies will be able to discuss gains in these interim outcome skills in the RFP.

To be eligible, the minimum number of weeks of paid/unpaid work required will be 5 weeks for internships and three months for work. Because of the research-based link between number of work hours and negative effects on school performance, no more than 15-20 work hours are recommended during the school year, including weekends, and no more than 30-40 hours per week over the summer.

To measure our progress, UWMBMV will count the following:

- **Total unduplicated number of youth who participated in a work readiness skills program with an employment component.**
 - **Of these, the number who gained the required level of work experience**

E. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Outcome Statement: Families and Caregivers will engage in their children’s learning and development.

RATIONALE

Children grow up in the context of their families. As is consistent with the work of the Massachusetts Statewide Action Plan for Youth, a core component of the strategy is the importance of families being there to support their growing children and youth. Within the youth impact area, we are investing in parents/ caregivers ability to nurture, motivate, engage with and support their youth. The Youth Impact area is particularly interested in family engagement and in parental mental health wellness. The Building Family Assets impact area addresses other critical dimensions of a family’s support including providing basic needs, affordable housing and sustainable employment.

For this measure, the word “family” is meant to be inclusive of all types of families and caretakers including children and youth that are raised by foster parents, aunts and uncles, grandparents, guardians and siblings. This measure focuses on two strategies:

1. OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS THAT HAVE HIGH QUALITY FAMILY ENGAGEMENT COMPONENTS

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME FAMILY ENGAGEMENT RATIONALE

United Way has a long history of providing capacity building support for family engagement through the “*The Engaging Families Initiative*.” In partnership with BOSTnet, the Harvard Family Research Project, The Wallace Foundation, and 14 agencies, the guide titled: *Focus on Families! How to Build and Support Family-Centered Practices in Afterschool*²¹ was published and has been used internationally to invest in this work. Trainings, technical assistance and tools have simultaneously been used to strengthen family engagement practices.

Our parent engagement focus is supported by numerous research studies that indicate children and youth whose families are more involved in their children’s learning and development display higher levels of achievement than children whose families are less involved. A study examining the differences in elementary children found that for children with the exceptional risk of having low income and low parent education, there were exceptional

²¹ Harvard Family Research Project and Build the Out-of-School Time Network (BOSTnet) (2006). *Focus on Families! How to Build and Support Family-Centered Practices in After School*.

achievement rewards associated with high family involvement.²² The same is true for older youth. Unfortunately, family engagement tends to decrease during the middle and high school years, a time when the challenges of adolescence put youth more at risk and youth's greater independence makes the efforts more difficult. Yet during this time, family engagement continues to remain a powerful indicator of adolescent's academic achievement and other positive outcomes. For example, family involvement in secondary education is associated with higher rates of college enrollment.²³

Youth-serving programs have a unique opportunity to develop trusting and respectful relationships with families that will benefit youth, families, schools, and the programs, themselves. The Massachusetts Afterschool Research Study found that programs with higher levels of parent engagement had youth with stronger, more supportive adult-youth relationships²⁴. However, quality family engagement is not necessarily the norm for programs serving youth. The "Needs Assessment of High-Risk Youth in Boston" reported a lack of parent/caregiver engagement in youth-serving programs.²⁵

2. PARENT/ CAREGIVER MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTION

PARENT/CAREGIVER MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTION RATIONALE

Often times, mental health issues stand in the way of a parent's ability to effectively parent and engage in their children's learning and development. Mental illnesses in parents represent a risk for children in the family. These children are at higher risk for developing mental illnesses than other children. The risk is particularly strong when a parent has one or more of the following: bipolar disorder, an anxiety disorder, ADHD, schizophrenia, alcoholism or other drug abuse, or depression.²⁶ Nationally, nearly 12% of children lived with at least one parent who is dependent on or abused alcohol or an illicit drug during the past year.²⁷

Depressive disorders affect approximately about 9.5% of the U.S. population age 18 and older in a given year. This includes major depressive disorder, dysthymic disorder, and bipolar disorder.²⁸ Researchers have reported that parental major depression is associated with higher rates of phobias, panic disorder, disruptive behavior disorders, poorer social functioning, and worse academic performance among their children.²⁹

The mental illness of a parent can put stress on family relationships. Inconsistent and unpredictable care can lead to attachment and behavior issues in children. Children of parents with mental illness are susceptible to having to take on inappropriate responsibilities for their age and may endure unfair stigma leading to isolation. Parents may find it difficult to provide stimulation, motivation and inspiration for their child. Appropriate care and support should be provided to the family including an assessment of the needs of the children.³⁰

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ELIGIBILITY

Because of the lack of outcome measurement tools to assess improved parent/caregiver's engagement and, of course, the difficulty of agencies tracking parent outcomes, UWMBMV has chosen to use a proxy for measurement-families participating in programs that have high quality family engagement components. Our theory is that if it is a

²² Eric Dearing, Holly Kreider, Sandra Simpkins, and Heather Weiss, (Jan. 2007), Family Involvement in School and Low-Income Children's Literacy Performance, www.hfrp.org

²³ Zarrett, N & Eccles, J (2006) The Passage to Adulthood: Challenges of Late Adolescence: New Directions for Youth Development 111, 13-28

²⁴ MARS

²⁵ high risk youth assessment

²⁶ American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; Facts for Families; Children of Parents with Mental Illness; No 39; Updated Dec. 2008

²⁷ Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).; National Survey of Drug Use and Health; Children Living with Substance Dependent or Substance abusing Parents 2001-2007; <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k9/SAParents/SAParents.pdf>

²⁸ NIMH. "The Numbers Count: Mental Illness in America," [Science on Our Minds Fact Sheet Series](#).

²⁹ Technical assistance Partnership for child and Family Mental Health; **Parents with Depression and Child Outcomes:How Parents' Depression Affects Children** by Rachel Freed Anderson & Hammen, 1993; Beiderman et al., 2001; Weissman et al., 1997). http://www.tapartnership.org/specialtopics/parents_with_depression.asp

³⁰ <http://www.enotalone.com/article/3107.html>; e Not Alone/ You are not alone; Parents with Mental Illness by Rethink; 2009 www.rethink.org

high quality engagement program (and we do have tools to measure this), then parents will be engaged, and as the research indicates, their youth will benefit.

The *Focus on Families!* Guide is the framework for afterschool and out-of-school time agencies seeking to participate in this measure. To be eligible, agencies will need to submit the results of BOSTnet's titled, "**Family Engagement Checklist**" and an annual "**Family Engagement Action Plan**" based on the results of the self-assessment. These can be found at <http://www.bostnet.org/matriarch/documents/EngagingFamiliesToolkit.pdf>. The checklist identifies three levels of engagement: basic, intermediate and advanced. Minimum eligibility will be for agencies that are strong in the basic level, meet some of the intermediate level and are striving for the advanced level. Other additional resources that are available for agencies interested in this measure include the NAA standards (<https://naaweb.yourmembership.com/product/158538/NAA-Standards-for-Quality-School-Age-Care-.htm>); the MSAC core competencies (<http://www.mass-sac.org/pdf/CoreCompetency.pdf>) and the Boston Public Schools, DELTA's Roadmap <http://www.bpsdeltas.org/assessment/index.htm>. There are also "family involvement" constructs as part of the quality assessment tools: APT-Q and SACERS.

2. PARENT/CAREGIVER MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTION ELIGIBILITY

In this measure, we are focused on the primary needs of the individual parent or family through clinical intervention services including mental health counseling and therapeutic services. We will be tracking improved mental health. Preventive family support groups or parent education/awareness classes are not eligible as a priority in this cycle. Family-serving agencies are providing family coping and trauma services including mental health counseling and substance abuse prevention and treatment. These are critical to ensuring that the parent/caregiver with mental illness has the support necessary to ensure the well-being of their children.

Our theory is that with effective parent intervention, the risk for children will be decreased. Intervention should address the critical protective factors for children such as psychotherapy for parents and children, a stable home environment, help from family members and others to improve the family environment, knowledge that they are not to blame and a sense of being loved by the ill parent.³¹ Other protective factors related to individual youth outcomes, addressed in other measures, are strong relationships with a healthy adult, interest in and success at school, interests outside of the home, positive self-esteem and inner strength and good coping skills. Programs providing intervention services to youth may be eligible to apply under the "Youth avoid or reduce high-risk behaviors" measure.

HOW UWMBMV WILL TRACK SUCCESS FOR THIS MEASURE

1. OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

To measure our progress, UWMBMV will track the following:

- **The total unduplicated number of households whose children participate in a program with a *qualified* family engagement component.**

Definitions:

Households should be unduplicated. For example, if the program serves two siblings, they would be counted as one household.

"Qualified" will be determined during the review based on the submission of the results of checklist and the annual plan.

2. PARENT/CAREGIVER MENTAL HEALTH

To measure our progress, UWMBMV will track the following:

- **Total unduplicated number of parents who are better able to support their children's learning and development because they have improved mental health.**

***Agencies eligible for this measure will need to identify clinical or other tools that they use to assess improved functioning of the parent(s).**

³¹ American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; Facts for Families; Children of Parents with Mental Illness; No 39; Updated Dec. 2008

F. PUBLIC POLICY ON BEHALF OF INCREASING YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

Outcome Statement: Statewide public policies, practices and budget items will be enacted, implemented and enforced, thereby helping to ensure that youth will be college and/or work ready (see IYO Measure 4).

RATIONALE

Public policy advocacy is one of many strategies that United Way supports to reach all of our impact goals. In order to achieve scale and improve broader community conditions, United Way understands that we must affect systems-level change. Historically, our partner agencies receive significantly more government funding than private sector funding and they are greatly affected by state and federal policy and regulatory activity. Thus, United Way must leverage these available public resources and influence public policies and practices in order to achieve the most widespread impact possible.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In order to qualify for inclusion in this measure, agencies must

- (1) Be conducting public policy advocacy efforts on a statewide basis; and
- (2) Be taking an explicit leadership role in the public policy advocacy effort for which it is funded and/or be the “driver” of the effort (for example, the agency must lead a coalition, serve as a driving and active member of a steering committee of a coalition, and/or staff a coalition). Simply being a member of a coalition, even an active member, is not sufficient); and
- (3) Have dedicated paid or volunteer staff whose *primary responsibility* is conducting public policy advocacy activities. This may include contracted employees; and
- (4) Provide evidence of a track record of success in public policy advocacy. Examples of success include running successful policy campaigns, achieving specific increases in state budget line items, passage of bills, and/or changing public practices; and
- (5) Demonstrate a track record of success in changing the conditions *after* the formal policy/practice has been changed. Examples include informing the field about policy changes and providing professional guidance about implementation; and/or monitoring policy changes and working with agency administrators to implement and enforce these changes; and
- (6) Measure this work internally and/or have a logic model for their public policy advocacy activities. In addition, the agency must demonstrate specific improvements it has made in its work based on utilizing outcome measurement over time.

HOW UWMBMV WILL TRACK SUCCESS FOR THIS MEASURE

We are interested in how lives will be improved, both qualitatively and quantitatively. In other words, we will want to know what the impact will be if the goal of your public policy advocacy effort is achieved, and the scope or size of that impact.

We understand that this will require you to forecast the later impact of policy changes after you achieve your goal. We also recognize that advocacy goals are long-term goals and that measuring success means taking into account incremental progress and unexpected opportunities. External factors are difficult to predict and usually impossible to control. Determining which players’ efforts are individually responsible for specific outcomes is complex. As such, we understand that public policy work is difficult, although not impossible, to measure. In addition, we realize that the relevant state legislative sessions will not necessarily coincide with our funding schedule making measurement that much more difficult.

Despite these challenges, we will track success using your data and best estimates on how people’s lives are improved (and how many) based on the achievement of your goals (and /or the incremental success or progress therein).