

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

Peter Theisen, United Way of Whatcom County, ptheisen@unitedwaywhatcom.org, (360)733-8670 x103

Tamara Tregoning, United Way of Whatcom County, ttregoning@unitedwaywhatcom.org, (360)33-8670 x101

UNITED WAY OF WHATCOM COUNTY FOCUSES ON GOALS FOR THE COMMUNITY BY OFFERING A NEW FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Bellingham – For the first time United Way of Whatcom County will open up their Community Impact Fund and expand their partners in an effort to more effectively address specific local issues in Education, Income, and Health.

These 3 focus areas embody the building blocks of a strong life and of a strong community. With recent 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 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 goal in one of our key areas,” said Peter Theisen, United Way of Whatcom County President/CEO.

The change will involve an open 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

“This type of community impact alignment is an important way to create long-term change, stay focused on current issues, and utilize community level metrics to measure results. We will be looking at programs and techniques with specific outcomes, not just individuals served,” said Theisen.

Interested organizations must fulfill certain criteria and attend the United Way of Whatcom County’s Grant Seeker Technical Assistance Meeting at 3:30 on January 27 (RSVP required) in order to have the opportunity to apply for funds. Grants could range anywhere from \$5,000 to \$50,000 depending on the scope and qualification of the program.

“We are truly excited at the possibilities for community impact that this new 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>

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