VENTURE GRANT/SUSTAINABILITY GRANT POLICY
United Way of the Brown County Area, Inc.

The Venture Grant Program of the United Way of the Brown County Area is an innovative funding approach developed to provide short-term financial support to emerging human service groups whose programs are responding to an established community need. This program makes funds available to non-profit human service agencies or programs.

The Sustainability Grant Program of the United Way of the Brown County Area is an interim-usage fund for those organizations who are an already established agency with an ongoing program who are requesting funds in a "non-allocation" year. If funded, they would be eligible to apply the following year and enter the 2-year funding cycle for partner agencies.

I   CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY

A)   Incorporation as a non-profit human service organization in the service area of the United Way of the Brown County Area, Inc. Programs which have been in operation in excess of three years since incorporation, are eligible.

B)   Bylaws clearly defining the agency's purpose, functions, organization and lines of authority.

C)   Tax exemption under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and registered with the State of Minnesota and meet the guidelines of the Minnesota Charities Review Council.

D)   Policy of Non-discrimination for employees, volunteers & clients.

E)   An organized governing authority, comprised solely of volunteers with responsibility to implement a program and to administer and be accountable for the dollars granted. The governing authority must represent the community, which it seeks to serve, consist of a minimum of five (5) members and meet regularly.

F)   The applicant's primary geographical area of service and physical location must be in the United Way of the Brown County Area service area.

G)   Requests for support of the following items will <u>not</u> be considered for funding:

   1)   Direct financial assistance to individuals or families
   2)   Capital expenditures
   3)   Grants/stipends to conduct or attend conferences, seminars and workshops

4)   Audits
5)   Other items deemed inappropriate by the United Way of the Brown County Area Board of Directors

H)   Request in excess of $2,500 will be considered only under extraordinary circumstances.

II   APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

A)   Initial Venture/Sustainability Grant funding will cover a period not to exceed twelve (12) months. Therefore, proposals should reflect achievable objectives to be performed within the twelve-month funding period. The Community Investment Committee will review applications, and on-site visits and agency conferences may be conducted with applicants as requested. Notification of action on requests will be transmitted to applicants within ninety (90) days of receipt of application.

B)   Venture/Sustainability Grant recipients will be permitted to seek extended funding beyond the first year for stabilization purposes. This does not, however, oblige the Community Investment Committee to fund the re-application but only to consider its request. To be eligible for   consideration for a second period of funding, the agency must meet the following criteria:

      1)   All concerns (administrative, management, program, facility, financial, etc.) expressed by the Community Investment at the time of the first year's funding will have been addressed with positive, demonstrated result by the agency;
      2)   Demonstrated effectiveness of the agency's program in meeting the proposed community need;
      3)   Consistency of second year proposal with initial goals and objectives of the first year;
      4)   A clear and operable plan for generating other resources;
      5)   A financial/program report at the end of the project or year;
      6)   Second year requests are limited to fifty percent (50%) of the first year grant.

C)   Venture/Sustainability Grant funding will not be available to any agency beyond the second year.

III   EVALUATIVE CRITERIA FOR DOCUMENTATION OF NEED

A)   Documentation of need and the significance of the project to resolving need:

      1)   The general needs of the neighborhood or community to be served;

      2)   The proposal addresses a unique need not already addressed by another agency;

      3)   Estimate the number of clients to be served.

B)   The potential of voluntary support for the project.

C)   The consistency of the project with the United Way of the Brown County Area program emphasis and service delivery guidelines.

D)   The agency's financial need and impact which a Venture/Sustainability Grant will have on the agency's ability to carry out its program.

E)   The degree to which a Venture/Sustainability Grant will bring other funds to bear on the problem.

F)   The extent to which the applicant has examined other sources of funds for the project.

G)   The degree to which a grant would help to stabilize the agency or its program.

H)   The degree to which the proposal clearly defines how the monies will be used and delineates the objectives of the program in specific, achievable, and demonstrable terms, and a method for assessing the success or failure of the program.

I)   The feasibility of the proposed project within the total resources of the organization.

J)   The degree of innovation in the project.

IV   EVALUATION CRITERIA AT CONCLUSION OF GRANT PERIOD

It is recommended that within 60 days after completion of the Venture/Sustainability Grant Program, the Community Investment Committee meet with the recipient agency to conduct an evaluation process, which will include findings on:

1)   How the grant made has fulfilled the original intent and purposes of the Venture/Sustainability Grant Program;

2)   Types of services funded;

3)   Geographic areas and clientele served;

4)   Accomplishments of the recipient project and relationship of objectives of original request for funding;

5)   Description of how the grant was used (staffing, training, operation expenses, etc.);

6)   Financial and program future of the recipient's project;

7)   Recipient's feedback on the review process.