

**LIVE UNITED**



**United Way of Northwest Illinois, Inc.**

*Serving Jo Daviess, Stephenson, & Carroll Counties*

Letter of  
Inquiry

For Fiscal Year  
2024-2025

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The United Way of Northwest Illinois aspires to be the critical link which brings together our diverse communities to build stronger, healthier and more sustainable communities as cost effectively as possible.

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*Serving Jo Daviess, Stephenson, & Carroll Counties*



LOI is also known as a Letter of Inquiry, (a brief summary of your project)

Important:

This Letter of Inquiry process is for **new program funding requests** only. If you have received funding from United Way of Northwest Illinois in the past, you must complete the Community Impact RFP's to be eligible for funding. The letter of inquiry does not guarantee funding.

A Letter of Inquiry is not a vague exploration of an idea. It is assumed that you have already thought through your proposed project (including a budget!) and are just presenting an abbreviated description.

A Letter of Inquiry will allow us to quickly assess if there is a good match between United Way of Northwest Illinois' interests and the project. If it appears to be a good match, we will request a full proposal.

**Requirements to apply:**

- Be willing to sign a Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) before funds are distributed.
- Have a physical location in, and provide health or human services in Carroll, Stephenson, or Jo Daviess County.
- Be registered as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization in the State of Illinois.
- Meet fundraising eligibility criteria for the State of Illinois for public sector affiliation.
- Address an established need in Carroll, Stephenson, or Jo Daviess County, Illinois.
- Demonstrate the capacity to deliver services, including a clear mission and financial, programmatic and management stability.
- Serve people regardless of their ability to pay for services provided.
- If requested, provide documentation by an independent auditor that the agency's financial status presents fairly the position of the agency. If concerns are expressed about the agency's financial status, the agency must have written documentation of action either taken or planned to address those concerns. The United Way of Northwest Illinois Board of Directors has discretion in the application of this criterion.

**Your Letter of Interest:**

- Your LOI must be concise yet engaging. Use your words smartly. Avoid jargon, adjectives, flowery subjective statements that are not supported by facts. Write a logical, persuasive argument emphasizing how this project can help solve a significant problem or void in the community.
- A Letter of Inquiry is a condensed version of a proposal. Include the highlights of that information. For example, an executive summary will be a full page of your proposal, but in a

LOI it will only be one paragraph. Letters of Intent are generally 2–3 pages.

### **1. Opening Paragraph: Your summary statement.**

- Your summary statement/opening should be able to stand alone. In reading this, we should know what you want to do. Make it clear what you want us to do.
- Answer the following: Who wants to do what? How much is being requested? Is this a portion of a larger project cost? Over what period of time is money being requested?
- Make the connection between the United Way's interest and your project.
- Keep this paragraph short! This seems like a lot to address, but you will have room later to explain your rationale for the project, your methodology, and to establish your credibility.

### **2. Statement of Need: The "why" of the project. (1–2 paragraphs)**

- Explain what issue you are addressing.
- Explain why you have chosen to respond to this set of issues in the way that you have.
- State briefly why this matters in the area in which you will be working.
- Note who benefits. Make sure you can indicate the public good achieved.

### **3. Project Activity: The "what" and "how" of the project. (The bulk of your letter of inquiry)**

- Give an overview of the activities involved. Give details to the degree that space allows.
- Highlight why your approach is novel and deserving of the special attention that funding connotes.
- Indicate if there will be collaboration with other organizations and what their roles will be. Be specific about who does what.

### **4. Outcomes (1–2 paragraphs; before or after the Project Activity)**

- State the specific outcomes you hope to achieve.
- Indicate how evaluation is part of the project. How will you know you've achieved these outcomes?

### **5. Credentials (1–2 paragraphs)**

- Demonstrate why your institution or your staff is best equipped to carry out this activity.
- Put any historic background about the institution and program here.

### **6. Budget (1–2 paragraphs)**

- General description of the projects funding needs and total amount of request and any other funding sources to be leveraged with United Way dollars.

### **7. Closing (1 paragraph)**

- Provide any additional information we might need. Include a contact name and contact information.

Submission Dates and Times – The application is due March 10th at 4:00 P.M.  
February 10, 2024                      LOI available online (<https://uwnwil.communityforce.com/>)  
**As Requested**                              LOI Informational Session & Community Impact Introduction.  
March 10th, 2024                        LOI due at 4:00P.M.  
March-April, 2024                        Committee Review

UWNI reserves the right to postpone or alter the dates set forth in the timetable and will give notice on the agency website:

This LOI does not commit UWNI to award funding, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of a proposal, or to enter into negotiations. UWNI has the right to reject or accept any or all proposals or part of any or all proposals, or to cancel this LOI in whole or in part. UWNI has the right to require additional information from one or more applicant, to negotiate with one or more applicant, and/or to accept any proposal or proposals without negotiations. UWNI has the right, at its sole discretion, to waive minor discrepancies in proposals and minor deviations from LOI requirements. The successful applicant(s), if any, shall be selected based on UWNI's sole discretion in its determination of best value in terms of services provided, qualifications, and cost. At its sole discretion, UWNI may also choose to discontinue a program based on available funding or need, or a change in UWNI prioritization.