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Ben Center West: Bringing United Way's Ben Center to Southwest Baltimore

Primary Contact	Shelley Hallman
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Name of organization	United Way of Central Maryland
Mission statement	The mission of United Way of Central Maryland is to improve lives by empowering leaders and mobilizing the caring power of our communities. We envision happy thriving communities where all people live their best lives.
Overview of organization	<p>Since 1925, United Way of Central Maryland (United Way) has been a human service leader for the region, encouraging all Central Marylanders to give, advocate and volunteer. We are dedicated to helping individuals and families facing poverty meet their basic needs, stabilize and achieve self-sufficient lives. By drawing upon local knowledge, data and expertise to understand the community's needs, we are able to identify where gaps exist and concentrate on what works in addressing them -- serving as a powerful advocate on critical health and human issues.</p> <p>We envision happy thriving communities where all people live their best lives. We achieve this through grant-making, direct-service initiatives, collaborations, promoting volunteerism, and advocacy, all while mobilizing more resources for the nonprofit community by serving as a highly efficient, effective and trusted fundraiser.</p> <p>Through our grant-making, we help sustain and grow the capacity of community-based partners to strengthen families and neighborhoods, underpinning the community safety net. We direct funding annually to more than 100 nonprofit organizations through grants that target specific community needs, most as part of a competitive allocation process administered by volunteer partnership boards established in each of the six jurisdictions we serve. For FY19, our partnership boards provided guidance and expertise to inform our investment of \$2.3 million to organizations across the region.</p> <p>Over recent years, our mission has evolved beyond fundraising and grant-making and into incubating and growing direct-service initiatives, such as the</p>

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	<p>United Way Benjamin Franklin Center located at Benjamin Franklin High School in Brooklyn/Curtis Bay in South Baltimore City. A true neighborhood resource hub, the Ben Center, as it is affectionately known, offers support for teen parents, early childhood education, mental and behavioral health services, homelessness prevention and workforce development programs. These programs are available not only for students enrolled at Benjamin Franklin High School but also for community residents.</p>
Website	www.uwcm.org
State where proposal is located	Maryland
Proposal title	Ben Center West: Bringing United Way's Ben Center to Southwest Baltimore
Support request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investment/Grant
Requested amount	\$100,000
Other significant partners in the proposal	<p>Our primary partner in this work is the University of Maryland, Baltimore and their Community Engagement Center.</p> <p>Other partners specifically for the new Family Center include the Maryland State Department of Education, Baltimore City Public Schools, and Parents and Children Together, Inc. (PACT). PACT is affiliated with the Kennedy Krieger Institute and is recognized as a leader in the design, implementation and evaluation of early childhood education programs. They have partnered with the Family Center in Brooklyn/Curtis Bay since its inception and will be a critical partner in the development and implementation of the new Family Center in Poppleton.</p>
Proposal narrative	<p>Since 2014, the nationally recognized Ben Center has made a tangible and significant impact on the stability and success of children and families in South Baltimore. The Ben Center model is built around listening to the community and responding with multi-generational, wraparound services provided by United Way and its network of partners. The core of the Ben Center is the Family Center which is located on-site at the high school. The Family Center provides quality child care to the infants and toddlers of teen parents enrolled at the school alleviating their greatest barrier to high school graduation. It also provides parenting training and support, academic support, and social work services to help these young parents excel as both parent and student. Since 2014, the Ben Center has served 83 teen parents and 65 infants and toddlers and achieved a graduation rate of 74%, nearly double the national graduation rate for teen parents.</p> <p>In 2018 United Way began working with the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) to bring the Ben Center model to Poppleton, a high-need community in Southwest Baltimore City. UMB serves as an anchor institution in Poppleton and embraces a commitment to improving health, creating wealth and advancing social justice in the community surrounding its campus. In 2015, UMB opened the Community Engagement Center (CEC) to provide vital health, wellness, employment, education and social services to nearby residents. Since</p>

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	<p>it opened, the CEC has registered more than 29,000 visits from nearby residents- most of whom are repeat visitors requesting a range of services.</p> <p>UMB is currently working to expand the footprint of their CEC in Poppleton. They invited United Way to join their efforts and bring the Ben Center model to Southwest Baltimore to complement the services provided by the CEC. A core component of this project will be a new Family Center United Way is building in Poppleton to serve teen and young parents from the community and their infants and toddlers. In addition to building a new Family Center in Poppleton, United Way will bring education, housing, and human services programs to the community. These new services will be housed in a new Community Engagement Center UMB is building next to James McHenry Elem/Middle School in Poppleton. Services will also be provided within area schools, including at James McHenry and nearby Franklin Square Elem/Middle School, and at the recreation center directly behind James McHenry.</p>
Issues addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Services and Facilities
Geographic impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Neighborhood(s)
Population served	<p>The new Family Center will provide quality early childhood education to approximately 36 infants and toddlers annually and wraparound services for their young parents. The majority of the parents served will be teen parents enrolled at Excel Academy, a public high school located in Poppleton; in the 2018-19 school year there were more than 40 teen parents enrolled at Excel. The other services United Way will bring to Southwest Baltimore will serve hundreds of residents of all ages each year.</p>
Population income	<p>A map of the area to be served by this project is attached to this application. The project will serve the entire Southwest Baltimore community, which encompasses seven neighborhoods, with a primary focus on Poppleton where the need is the greatest and where the new UMB s CEC building and United Way’s new Family Center will be located.</p> <p>The median household income in Poppleton is \$18,755, compared to \$42,241 for Baltimore City and \$78,916 for the state. Two out of every three children in the community live below the federal poverty line and 85% of students at James McHenry qualify for Free and Reduced Price Meals (FARMS). One in ten homes in the neighborhood are vacant or abandoned and fewer than 30% are owner-occupied. Nearly 30% of Poppleton s adult residents, age 25 and older, do not have a high school diploma or GED severely limited their earning potential. As a result of the area s economic challenges the life expectancy in Poppleton is just 68.4 years compared to 70.6 years for Baltimore City and 79.2 years for the state.</p>
Anticipated outcomes/impact	<p>Nationwide, only 40% of teen parents graduate high school. The primary reason teen parents drop out is a lack of affordable childcare. In Poppleton there are no Early Head Start providers and the area s Head Start does not accept children until the age of three. Given the area’s low median income, private childcare is unaffordable driving many young parents to drop out pf school to care for their children. The new Family Center will fill this void by providing free, quality childcare to low-income teen and young parents</p>

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	<p>enabling them to remain in or return to school, graduate and pursue secondary education or job training. We anticipate achieving a 75% graduation rate for the young parents served by the new Family Center.</p> <p>Anticipated outcomes for the other services United Way will bring to Southwest Baltimore include:</p> <p>A part-time 2-1-1 helpline employee will work out of the new CEC building to provide information and referrals to residents on everything from local food bank hours to home energy assistance and more. The 2-1-1 helpline currently fields over 110,000 calls per year with nearly half originating in Baltimore City. We will establish our 16th Homelessness Prevention Program site at James McHenry staffed by a full-time Case Manager who will provide emergency financial assistance and intensive case management services to help families avoid homelessness. The Case Manager can serve up to 20 families at a time with families typically completing in 10-12 months. Since 2012, this evidence-based program has helped 2,130 families avoid homelessness and prevented school transfers for 2,933 students.</p> <p>Finally, we will implement our innovative dropout prevention program, On Track 4 Success, at Franklin Square. Created in partnership with the Johns Hopkins School of Education, this program uses common data metrics to identify students at risk of dropping out early in their academic career and deliver targeted interventions to get them back on track.</p>
<p>Evaluation methods used to measure success</p>	<p>United Way uses a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework for developing and tracking both population-level outcomes and performance of programs and initiatives. RBA is a disciplined way of thinking and taking action; it is used by communities to improve the lives of children, families and the community as a whole, starting with the end in mind and working backward, step by step, towards the means. RBA utilizes results and indicators to measure change at the population level, and performance measures to evaluate programs, initiatives, systems, or strategies. It also allows for language discipline and improved communication across partners, stakeholders, and community members. RBA is used by communities worldwide as well as by many national and international organizations including the Annie E. Casey Foundation.</p> <p>RBA categorizes performance measures in three categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How much was done? / How many were served? Targets are set and data collected to measure program outputs and monitor the scope/scale of the program. 2. How well was it done? Performance measures are established to assess the quality of our work and/or its efficiency and provide data to inform ongoing improvement. 3. Is anyone better off as a result? Performance measures are established to assess the impact the work has on improving important outcomes for participants.

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	<p>Below is an example of how this framework will be implemented at the new Family Center.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How much was done? How many were served? We will examine both the number of children and parents served annually.2. How well was it done? We will use the Ages & Stages Questionnaire to track each child s developmental progress and the Nursing Child Assessment Satellite Training Parent-Child Interaction Scales to track each parent s progress.3. 3. Is anyone better off as a result? We will track whether children exiting the program are entering Kindergarten school ready and how many parents are graduating high school.
<p>Project timeframe. Is your request for an existing or new program?</p>	<p>New Program</p>