



Application Template
*United Way of Fairfield County Youth Connections
 Center*

Application Section I: Community Connectors Program Description

1. The target population is students grades 5-12. Identify the grade level or levels at each school that your program will be targeting. Programs may serve students in one or more grade levels.

Lancaster: LHS- Gr 9-12; Ewing and Sherman Middle Schools- Gr 6-8; Cedar Heights, East, Medill, Sanderson, South, Tallmadge, Tarhe, West Elementary- Gr 5. Walnut Township: HS - Gr 7-12, ES - Gr 5-6. Amanda Clearcreek: HS - Gr9-12, MS - Gr6-8, ES - Gr 5.

2. Provide number of youth in each grade level and at each school your program proposes to serve. Connections Youth Center welcomes all Fairfield County youth in grades 5-12. The table identifies partner district target schools/grade levels. Those youth will be actively recruited to participate in drop in and membership. Project partners anticipate over 1800 will participate in at least one 'drop in' activity over the course of the grant period. This was calculated by school and grade level below as 50% of the enrollment of grades 5-9 in target schools and 10% of enrollment of grades 10-12. We anticipate 300 will become 'members' who complete an intake/registration and work to achieve personal goals.

	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
LANCASTER HS					235	43	41	40
EWING		115	117	119				
SHERMAN		115	115	125				
CEDAR HEIGHTS	25							
EAST	35							
MEDILL	26							
SANDERSON	24							
SOUTH	20							
TALLMADGE	24							
TARHE	33							
WEST	35							
Walnut Township ES	20	22						
Walnut Township HS			24	20	25	4	5	5
AMANDA CLEARCREEK ES	68							
AMANDA CLEARCREEK MS		73	73	68				
AMANDA CLEARCREEK HS					78	14	14	14
TOTAL (1,814)	310	325	329	332	338	61	60	59

3. Select one: Which of the following best describes the proposed project? Select one.

- A. **Totally new program developed by this organization**
- B. Replication of an existing model in use by others
 - Please provide the name of this model.
- C. Expansion of an existing program within the applicant organization
- D. Extension of an existing program to a new setting

4. Please describe your project. How will it address each of the five Community Connectors core

principles and what outcomes will you use to measure success.

PROJECT PARTNERS: *Non-Profit Applicant:* United Way of Fairfield County. *Business Partner:* River Valley Mall. *Eligible Districts:* Lancaster Schools, Amanda Clearcreek Schools, Walnut Township Schools. *Faith-Based Organizations:* Faith Memorial Church, First Baptist Church. *Other Partners:* Fairfield Co Educational Service Center, Fairfield Co Juvenile Court, Fairfield Co Family Adults and Children First, Lancaster Family Y, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Fairfield County, Prevention Works, Fairfield County ADAMH Board.

United Way of Fairfield County (UW-FC) is focused on collective action- establishing goals, identifying strategies and measurements and mobilizing the resources- people and financial – to find and deliver solutions to the problems keeping our community from being even stronger. River Valley Mall approached UW-FC in November 2014 explaining that youth, especially those in grades 5-9, ‘hang out’ at the mall without adult supervision and are often involved in a variety of risk taking behaviors. Annually, youth are removed from the mall at twice the rate of adults. Search Institute research shows youth who begin these behaviors in middle school are significantly more at risk as they transition through high school into adulthood. Districts shared that by Fall 2015 they must create Career Advising and Student Success Plan policies connecting at risk youth to embedded academic and social emotional supports and all youth to career awareness, exploration and planning. Successful youth transition is a United Way Bold Goals so these challenges greatly resonated. Rather than admiring the problem, Mall leadership and UW-FC posed a question to school districts, businesses and faith based organizations : “How might our community work together to re-envision youth services so all youth have a safe and supportive location at the Mall where youth can convene for fun, but that also connects them with academic, college/career and social emotional supports youth need to thrive?”.

Together, UW-FC and partners will re-purpose vacant space (formerly Damon’s Restaurant) in River Valley Mall to create *Connections Youth Center (Connections)*, a safe and supervised place where middle and high school youth can convene to laugh, learn, grow and thrive. *Connections* will target youth in grades 5-9 for membership and participation in program activities. Youth in grades 10-12 will be peer mentors and participate in college/career exploration and planning. While any young person can come to *Connections* and membership is not required, *Connections* will strongly encourage membership so youth can get the greatest benefit from program activities. Members Only activities will be targeted to members’ specific needs, goals and interests. Parents/guardians will register their youth and give permission to attend programs and activities. Community partners will create new programs and/or relocate youth programs to *Connections* with the goal that the majority of Fairfield County youth programs are offered in an area where kids like to hang out - River Valley Mall.

Connections will offer drop in and membership programming. Any youth Gr 5-9 can participate in activities or simply enjoy being with friends in a safe, supervised and fun atmosphere. However, membership has it’s privileges! Members will earn ‘points’ for participation and working toward their personal goals. Points will be converted into prizes (free drinks in cafe, t-shirts etc), gift cards to area businesses, participation in special events, scholarships and other awards. Youth have been, and will continue to be, actively involved in planning and implementation. Youth focus groups were held in February 2015 to provide feedback regarding programming priorities and to develop prize/reward system. Upon award, youth will be recruited to join the planning team because youth voice and empowerment are essential to success. *Connections* will be open 3 evenings/week (1 week night, Friday and Saturday). UW-FC will provide staff to supervise and coordinate activities. Youth pastors will create volunteer corps to provide formal and informal mentoring and additional supervision. River Valley Mall will provide security. *Connections Youth Center* will offer Fairfield County a safe and supervised place where middle and high school youth can convene to **Laugh, Learn, Grow and Thrive**. These threads reflect Community Connector *Principles of Hope*.

We know that by surrounding youth with opportunities to develop leadership and positive character, they will improve social/emotional development and experience higher academic success. This translates into more youth pursuing post-secondary education/training, which ensures more adults achieve financial stability and solid careers. By working together to create

environments where youth are connected, cared for and engaged, UW-FC and partners will incubate and sustain a framework that can be replicated across Ohio. This project will set the state for all youth to become healthy and contributing adults with the academic and interpersonal skills to reach their fullest potential.

Principles of Hope #2: Character building: Laugh Activities

Connections Youth Center will have informal spaces with fun, healthy and appropriate activities offering a caring, supportive and supervised atmosphere where young people can 'drop in' to be together. Youth focus groups provided insight into what our youth like to do as well as what they want the space to look and feel like and important programming activities (see Attached Artist Rendering). The space will hold group game spaces such as ping pong, bumper pool, Wii, and Xbox. Lancaster Family Y will help redesign space for programs such as basketball, yoga and other fun, physical activities. UW-FC will hire Center Director to coordinate and schedule programs and supervise youth. Youth Pastors will provide volunteers to assist with supervision and be informal mentors. **Laugh** is centered around informally supporting youth and demonstrating positive character traits. **Laugh** is informal and driven by youth interest. Adults and youth share power by co-creating programs based on youth interest and need. Volunteer informal mentoring (adults/older HS youth) guide youngsters to develop strong character by showing care and support. Volunteers will play games, have fun and let young people know someone believes in them - always.

Youth Outcome: By 6/2018, average 200 youth per/week will receive informal mentoring through *Center* activities. Measurement: *Connections* student management data system. Baseline: 0.

Community Outcome: By June 2018, at least 50 informal mentors will volunteer once a month at *Connections Youth Center*. Measurement: Mentor Attendance records. Baseline: 0.

Principles of Hope #1: Goal Setting for 21st Century Careers: #3 Pathways to Achievement: Learn Activities

Connections Youth Center will offer short and long term programs to increase academic achievement and future planning. School staff, community partners, parents and youth will recruit members. When a youth joins as a member, they will complete an intake process modeled after Big Brothers Big Sisters program. Intake will include interest surveys and permission for cross agency sharing to support youth. Youth will create personal goals and earn reward points for participation in activities aligned to individual goals. As goals are met, adults and youth will celebrate and then work towards new goals. Community partners will schedule fun **Learn** activities so youth build new skills, hobbies and stay on top of their school work. Activities will include homework help, tutoring, online access, credit recovery or blended learning for high school credit; virtual field trips; visual/performing arts, health/fitness, clubs and hobbies, Career Cruising and OhioMeansJobs K12 resources. **Learn** activities will be aligned to district Career Advising/Student Success policies so youth can **Learn** here and at school.

Youth Outcomes: Annually, 75% of *Center* members will meet one personal goal created through annual intake meetings. Measurement: *Connections* student management data system. Baseline: 0

Community Outcome: Annually, *Center* will increase 10% in **Learn** programs aligned to Career Advising/Student Success. Measurement: Partner list, quarterly program calendar. Baseline: 0.

Principles of Hope Alignment: #4 Building a Sense of Resiliency: Grow Activities

Connections Youth Center will build partnerships to provide targeted supports for at-risk youth, especially those who have Student Success Plan at school. These youth will be recruited as members, participating in intake and goal setting. They will have formal mentors (Big Brothers Big Sisters- BBBS). Small group and individual meeting rooms will allow counseling and diversion programs in more private settings. All members (not just at risk youth) can participate in wellness (social/ emotional/ physical), healthy relationship and prevention programs. Young people can also participate in certification programs such as CPR, First Aid, Babysitting and Home Alone. Schools, families and social organizations can refer youth to any **Grow** activity. Youth who have lost Mall privileges can earn back the privilege through many of these programs. ADAMH Board will provide

mental health first aid training to all staff/ volunteers so they can identify and refer youth at risk for suicide, depression or other mental health concerns. BBBS will provide mentor training.

Youth Outcomes: *Center* members for 2+ years, report increased social acceptance and healthier attitudes towards risk taking behaviors. Measurement: BBBS Youth Outcome Survey. Baseline: 0.

Community Outcome: By 6/2018, Mall will report 50% decrease in number of youth who have lost mall privileges due to poor behavior/misconduct. Measurement: Mall records. Baseline 2014: 40

Principles of Hope: #3 Pathways to Achievement; #5 Believing in Positive Future: Thrive Activities

Thrive activities will align with district Career Advising and Student Success Plan policies. *Connections Youth Center* Partners will provide 'drop in' and 'members only' hands on, formal and informal college/career exploration, job shadowing and internship opportunities for all youth Gr 5-12. Fairfield Co ESC offers countywide perpetual license to Career Cruising and OhioMeansJobsK12 is available within it also. Director will expand partnerships to include career tech, higher education and industry partners willing to offer program demonstrations, field trips and excursions to experience the many career fields in high demand within Fairfield County. Area businesses will be encouraged to participate in Ohio's new Career Exploration Internship Program so HS youth can have paid internships in high demand fields. Center will host college visits, job shadowing and internships in area businesses. Partners will also provide FAFSA filing, tax prep, job fairs, ACT/SAT prep.

Youth Outcome: Active *Center* members for at least two years, will report increased post-secondary education aspiration. Measurement: BBBS Youth Outcome Survey. Baseline: 0.

Community Outcome: Each year, *Connections* will show 20% increase in number of partners providing **Thrive** programs aligned to district Career Advising/Student Success policies. Baseline: 0.

5. Please describe the specific activities your program will conduct.

(Principles of Hope #3,5) Connections Youth Center facility renovation: River Valley Mall will lease the 6,250 Sq Ft space (former Damon's Restaurant) to UW-FC donating 66% of rent as cash match (\$ 132,750 annual donation; \$ 387,187.50 total). The space needs significant renovations to be completed by Sept 2015 (see Rendering, Appendix). While grant will cover major renovation costs, volunteers will complete labor. First Baptist, Fairfield Christian and Faith Memorial, along with other partners will recruit adult volunteers will mentor youth as they design and renovate space together.

(Principles of Hope #1, 3) Planning: Upon award, UW-FC will hire Project Director who will transition into Center's Director. Director will recruit Youth Planning Team (Gr 7-9) to co-design Drop In and Members Only programs. Leadership Team and Youth Planning Team will prepare for Center's September Opening Weekend. Planning will include creating quarterly calendar of events around each *Connections* thread - **Laugh, Learn, Grow, Thrive** and developing marketing and communications strategies relevant to youth/families. Director will create Partner Memoranda of Understanding further defining responsibilities. Director will identify specific programs and activities per quarter. Each week, programs will include all threads **Laugh, Learn, Grow, Thrive** so there are always fun, engaging and developmentally appropriate activities for drop in youth and members that specifically build *Principles of Hope* and *Developmental Relationships*. Youth Pastors will create and train Volunteer Corps of adults and HS students (Gr 10-12) as formal and informal mentors and Center supervisors. UW-FC and Mall will create win-win safety and security plan meeting needs of youth, families and the Mall. Partners will plan and implement in-kind media campaign (print, social media, in person) to inform youth, families and community of this new opportunity. Additional partnerships will be identified to deepen program services. Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) and Director will design intake and registration processes which meet state/federal regulations and collect data to monitor program outcomes for grant and United Way's Bold Goals. Center staff and volunteers will participate in training provided by ADAMH Board, Prevention Works and/or BBBS so they have skills needed for formal/informal mentoring, relationship building with youth as well as abuse prevention and first aid (physical/mental health). Director will meet with social agency and district staff to create outreach and referral processes. Director, Youth Planning Team and

Leadership Team will meet regularly to monitor and refine program, measure outcomes and ensure sustainability. During intake, and at least annually, members will identify academic, wellness (social, emotional and/or physical) and college/career aspiration goals, creating strategies to achieve goals. Director and Youth Planning Team will implement and refine incentive processes as youth meet short term and long term goals. At least quarterly, Director will meet with partners to ensure strong outreach, referrals and progress is made.

(Principles of Hope #2) Laugh activities will always be occurring, so youth can 'drop in' and hang out with friends. Volunteers/informal mentors will be onsite intentionally building relationships and modeling positive character traits. Weeknight programs will mix **Laugh** with all other threads to encourage youth participation. Weekend programs will be primarily **Laugh** with some **Learn**. As our younger youth play games, sports and simply 'hanging out' with friends while supported and supervised by healthy, caring adults and older youth, they will begin to also demonstrate the character traits being modeled.

(Principles of Hope #1, 3) Learn activities will focus on academics, physical health/ wellness and visual or performing arts. Homework help/tutoring will be available on school nights. Weekend **Learn** activities will be games, sports and arts so young people are **laughing** and **learning**. Lancaster Family Y will provide monthly physical health and wellness programs. Districts will provide computers and online learning tools so students can complete homework, online courses, do project research and access Career Cruising and OhioMeansJobs K12 resources. Free ACT/SAT Prep is also provided. *Connections* and schools will align programs to district Career Advising/Student Success policies.

(Principles of Hope #4) Grow activities will be mainly Members Only, targeted to individual social, emotional needs identified during goal setting. **Grow** activities will include onsite counseling, prevention and diversion programs. At risk youth referred by social service and those with Student Success Plans may have additional supports, specific expectations and/or time frames in to reach their goals. These youth will be highly encouraged to participate in all Center threads so they are exposed to healthy role models with others making positive life choices. Former members can return to *Connections* for support when they face life challenges. Program staff will meet with anyone who need help accessing community resources to cope with life stressors building resiliency.

(Principles of Hope #3, #5) Thrive activities are college and career aspiration programs (aligned to district Career Advising Policies) for any youth in grades 5-12 - membership not required. Activities may include college visits and business tours; experiments at Lancaster HS Fab Lab or our county's new outdoor science labs; job shadow or professional mentoring; and workshops where youth build new career skills. Students can use Career Cruising, OhioMeansJobsK12 and free ACT/SAT prep programs at *Connections* so they can deepen their thinking about future. The Mall will connect youth with businesses near *Connections* who might provide professional mentoring and internship. Partners will encourage businesses to participate in Ohio's Career Exploration Internship program offering youth paid internships in high demand fields. Financial aid and postsecondary testing/planning supports (Gr 10-12) will connect older youth. Youth Planning Team will plan activities to expand a young person's mind to limitless opportunities and be fun and hands on.

(Principles of Hope #3, 5) Sustainability. UW-FC's goal is for *Connections* to be self sustaining by 2020 as an independent not-for-profit organization jointly run by youth and adults. UW-FC and partners will immediately begin sustainability planning by creating a team focused on creating strategies to ensure the Center is fiscally/programmatically sustainable. Efforts to include fundraising for operational expenses, developing new partnerships to create new programs, youth recruitment and creation of a 501(c)3 organization. As youth age out, the sustainability team will

develop strategies to continue to engage them as mentors, contributors, volunteers, board members and youth employers.

6. Discuss how program will utilize [best practices](#) to ensure success. Are there successful mentor programs after which you will model? Please name program describe what makes it successful.

Connections was designed around Youth Development Best Practice from three primary research sources - ACT for Youth Center Excellence's Best Practices for Youth Development Programs (2003), Search Institute's Developmental Relationships Framework and Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring.

Best Practices for Youth Development Programs (2003): "There are specific features of settings that support positive youth development and can be incorporated into community programs: physical and psychological safety; appropriate structure; supportive relationships; opportunities to belong; positive social norms; support for efficacy and mattering; opportunities for skill building; integration of family, school, and community efforts (Community Programs to Promote Youth Development, National Research Council, 2002)". The features were identified within best practice settings and each is embedded within our program infrastructure and design. 1. Comprehensive, long-term programs that involve all aspects of a young person's life -- home, school, and community. 2. Strong relationships with parents/other adults. 3. New roles and responsibilities for youth. 4. Attention to specific youth needs in a physically and psychologically safe environment. 5. Highly qualified and diverse staff that are well trained and committed to the youth development philosophy. 6. Opportunities for critical thinking and active, self-directed learning. 7. Opportunities for critical thinking and active, self-directed learning. 8. Programs that motivate and convey high expectations for youth.

Search Institute's Developmental Relationships Framework (2014): A developmental relationship is a close connection between a young person and an adult or between a young person and a peer that powerfully and positively shapes the young person's identity and helps the young person develop a thriving mindset. A thriving mindset is not just to get by in life, but to flourish. Developmental relationships help young people attain psychological and social skills essential for success in education and in life. Young people can form these relationships with their parents and family members, with their friends and peers, with staff members in their schools and programs, and with caring adults in their neighborhoods and communities. Search Institute confirms that both caring and adults are necessary but not sufficient strands in the broader web of relationships that kids need to succeed. In addition to expressing care, young people also need people in their lives (both adults and peers) who challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring Programs: BBBS Youth Mentoring supports the development of healthy youth by addressing the need for positive interaction, thereby reducing risk factors for negative behaviors and enhancing protective factors for positive behaviors. BBBS youth mentoring programs help at-risk children transition successfully into adulthood by helping them stay in school, stay out of trouble, and develop assets they need to become strong, capable adults. We know that children who have a positive role model are more likely to succeed than those who do not. We also know BBBS model of one-to-one youth mentoring has been proven to help children overcome adversity and beat the odds. National studies conducted by Public/Private Ventures and published by the Society for Research in Child Development provide evidence that children who have a positive role model are more likely to show improvements in academic achievement, self-concept, lower recidivism rates among juvenile delinquents, and reductions in substance abuse.

7. Describe organization's previous experience with this type of program OR similar scale, including previous evaluations, size, duration of previous programs, goals, and outcomes.

Since 1940, United Way - Fairfield County (UW-FC) has worked to advance the common good by focusing on education, income and health. These are the building blocks for a good life - a quality education that leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement,

and good health. UW-FC raises over \$1,500,000 annually using a team of volunteers who help educate fellow workers about the growing array of human service needs in Fairfield County. Beyond financial support to local programs, UW-FC is partner of choice for many corporations, organizations, agencies, and individuals who want to make a real impact in their community. Because of these partnerships, UW-FC can effectively advocate for Fairfield County's most pressing human service needs. UW-FC's strength is its ability to build partnerships, forging consensus and leveraging resources to make a measurable difference in the Fairfield County community. UW-FC is investing over \$279,000 in educational programs for 2015 and will provide funding and support to over \$900,000 in community investments in the areas of income, health and other important community programs. UW-FC works with our partner agencies to complete outcome planning and evaluation for all funded programs. Outcomes measurement is an important tool that strengthens programs and effectively communicates results. All funded programs must complete outcome planning and conduct ongoing evaluation of their programs. These programs must submit logic models and outcome frameworks that demonstrate their measurement plans. In addition, these programs annually report their evaluation data to United Way. UW-FC also encourages all programs to use outcome measurement. We provide resources and training on developing and implementing outcome measurement plans.

BBBS will design and implement formal mentoring activities and monitor youth development outcomes. A national evaluation of BBBS programs found that in addition to positive changes in grades, perceived scholastic competence, truancy rates, and substance use, mentored youth were more likely than non-mentored youth to report improved parent/peer relationships. Because the central component of mentoring programs is the formation of close alliances between mentors and mentees, mentor relationships can offer a model to adolescents of care and support. In doing so, mentors may challenge negative views that adolescents hold of themselves or of relationships with adults and demonstrate that positive, caring relationships with adults are possible. Therefore, helping relationships can become a corrective experience for those children who may have experienced unsatisfactory relationships with their parents.

Public/Private Ventures, an independent Philadelphia-based national research organization, looked at over 950 boys and girls from eight BBBS agencies across the US selected for large size and geographic diversity. This 1994-95 study, is widely considered to be foundational to the mentoring field in general and to BBBS Community-Based program in particular. Approximately half of the children were randomly chosen to be matched with a Big Brother or Big Sister. The others were assigned to a waiting list. The matched children met with their Big Brothers or Big Sisters about three times a month for an average of one year. Researchers surveyed both the matched and unmatched children, and their parents on two occasions: when they first applied for a Big Brother or Big Sister, and again 18 months later. Researchers found that after 18 months of spending time with their Bigs, the Little Brothers and Little Sisters, compared to those children not in our program, were: 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs, 27% less likely to begin using alcohol, 52% less likely to skip school, 37% less likely to skip a class and 33% less likely to hit someone. They also found that the Littles were more confident of their performance in schoolwork and getting along better with their families.

8. [What will make collaboration successful? What will indicators\) of success be for this collaboration?](#)

Project outcomes are described in Evaluation Plan (p10) are critical indicators of successful collaboration. UW-FC also anticipates increases key youth development measurements identified as our BOLD GOALS. We measure this annually at a community level and anticipate *Connections* will help further these goals. Decrease Risk Factors Among Youth: 33% of high school seniors will report having never used alcohol, 65% will report never having used marijuana, 85.7% will report having never used another person's prescription for non-medical purposes, and 98% will report having never used heroin. Increase Social Competencies and Protective Factors: 90% of high school seniors will report having a trusted adult at home and 70% will report having a trusted adult at school in which they can confide. Increase High School Graduation Rates and Career Access: at least 95% of HS seniors will graduate. Finally, the ultimate indicator of successful collaboration will

be long term sustainability of *Connections Youth Center* as an independent not for profit serving Fairfield County youth.

Application Section II: Program Management

9. **Leadership Team:** The leadership team should be comprised of no less than one member of each partnering organization. Please provide a brief bio of each leadership team member, including a brief description of the team member's passion for the program and interest in working with young people.

Connections Youth Center Leadership Team consists of all required partners including representatives from 16 partners-community non-profits, faith based organizations, eligible school districts and business partners. See attached Leadership Bio Worksheets for more information.

10. A timeline of all major activities must be provided. Assessment, planning and initial training must be completed by September 7, 2015. Services must begin by September 7, 2015.

Year One

Spring 2015: Contracts/MOUs signed; Project Director begins; Youth Planning Team created and begins; continue Leadership Team meetings; media announcements; finalize marketing/communication plans, update partner web pages and social media; Architect and contractor finalize renovation plans; Board meetings with partners and school districts to promote collaboration and understanding.

Summer 2015: Renovations to facility; Community adults mentor youth during renovations; Youth Planning & Leadership Team meetings continue; begin marketing and communications; Youth Pastors begin Volunteer Corps recruitment; Project Director expands partnership opportunities and creates additional contracts/MOUs; Finalize Center Calendar for Sept - Dec 2015; work with districts student recruitment/marketing details; Finalize safety and security plan with Mall staff and security providers; BBBS & Director finalize intake/membership process and data collection; Incentive/Reward program drafted; create Opening Weekend Kickoff Events; Staff/volunteer training; UW-FC Board Presentation on Progress. Sustainability Subcommittee created and initial meeting.

Fall 2015: Continue timeline activities from last quarter, add: Finalize Renovations, Opening Weekend Kickoff. Fine tune processes: intake/membership, safety/security, volunteer recruitment, incentive/ reward program, data collection, marketing/communications. Plan College/Career (Thrive); UW-FC Board Report. Sustainability Subcommittee report to UW-FC Executive Director.

Winter 2015-16: Continue timeline activities from last quarter, add: renovation punch list; Director expands partnership opportunities; create contracts/MOUs; UW-FC Board Report. Sustainability Subcommittee report to UW-FC Executive Director.

Year Two

Spring 2016: Continue last quarter timeline activities, add: Annual Ohio Dept of Education report.

Summer 2016: Continue last quarter timeline activities, add: Center summer schedule based on youth and community interest; Create plan for Fall Expansion and Finalize Center Fall Calendar; Sustainability Subcommittee Business Plan to UW-FC Executive Director. UW-FC Board Report

Fall 2016: Continue timeline activities from last quarter; Sustainability Subcommittee completes application for 501(c)3 status and finalizes Business Plan. UW-FC Board Report

Winter 2016-17: Continue timeline activities from last quarter, add business plan implementation.

Year Three - Quarterly Timeline is same as Year Two

11. Describe the implementation process for reaching the following milestones:

a. Screening, orientation, supporting, and monitoring process for mentors and other personnel;

Timeline to develop screening process: 4/ 2015- 8/2015: approved by UW-FC before opening

Personnel: UW-FC hires 1 full time employee (Director) UW-FC will follow local, state, federal law and Board policies/procedures for screening, orientation, supporting and monitoring. Director reports to United Way Executive Director and complete background check requirements per Ohio law.

Formal Mentors: Director adapt Big Brothers Big Sisters' (BBBS) volunteer application for Formal Mentors (1-1 or small group settings with at risk youth). Written application with general demographics, background, interest and references, and copy of government issued ID/driver's license. Proof of auto insurance will be required if Mentor may transport youth. References, including background check, will be checked as required by Ohio law. Background check includes search of public domain records, driving records check, juvenile/adult criminal history check, military records, and other records where required by local, state, or federal law for volunteers working with youth. Mentors have personal interview and receive training described below. Director/BBBS co-design processes for recruiting, training, supporting and monitoring formal mentors consistent with UW-FC/ BBBS expectations.

Informal Mentors: Director/youth pastors co-design processes for recruiting, training, supporting and monitoring informal mentors consistent with UW-FC expectations and best practices for healthy youth development. Informal Mentors will never be alone with youth. Director and/or properly trained and background checked adults will always be in the Center and available to support/ monitor them. Informal Mentors will complete an application and interview process. They will receive training on effective relationship building, healthy youth development and first aid (physical and mental health).

Volunteer/Paid Program Providers: Center will screen volunteer and paid program providers. With the exception of counseling, program providers will not work 1-1 with youth. Unless program provider meets BBBS standards to work alone with youth, there will always be Center staff and/or other properly trained and background checked staff/volunteer present and available to support/monitor.

b. [Identification and intake process for mentees;](#)

Timeline to develop intake process: April 2015- August 2015. All processes approved by UW-FC Director prior to Center opening. August 2015, intake process shared publicly.

Parent Permission/Drop In Registration: Parent/Guardian and youth fill out demographic, interest, permission & emergency contact info (members and drop in) Parent/guardian and youth receive facility tour and invited to join as a member. Youth sign in/out every time they enter or leave Center.

Member Intake Process: Member complete intake form that is more detailed information than Drop In Registration/Parent Permission and includes information about youth's background, interests and goals. Center staff and youth co-create goals and action steps to reach goals. Goal attainment align with prizes/ rewards. Parents asked to sign multi-agency information sharing document so youth can participate in programs and services. At risk youth (referral based) will receive a Formal Mentor who will work with them to achieve their academic, social, emotional and career aspiration goals.

c. [The means by which you will involve families of youth in your program;](#)

Families will always be welcome to be involved in program activities. The first time a young person wants to come to *Connections*, a parent/guardian will be asked to visit encouraging bond development with youth, staff and Center. This bond will encourage families to want to participate in Center opportunities. Parents, older siblings, grandparents and other family members can volunteer as informal mentors. Parents and guardians can stop by at any time for a tour or to just hang out with their kids. During 'intake' and at least annually thereafter, the Center will have goal updates where staff or mentors meet with families to discuss each member's progress towards meeting his/her personal goals. As they achieve these goals, the Center will host celebrations where they invite families and community partners to share in every young person's success. *Connections* will always be in search of new programs and opportunities for family members to share their work, hobbies or life experiences. Flyers, social media and partner websites will provide families with additional ways to know what is happening and become involved throughout the year. A web based calendar will have information about how family members may volunteer to teach a new program, host a job shadow experience or a field trip. Center staff will communicate with parents when youth

are demonstrating risk taking behaviors, offering advice and resources to support parents and youth. Families in need of support may reach out to staff and volunteers for referrals to community programs.

ongoing training of mentors throughout the program, including topics and frequency;

Big Brothers Big Sisters will provide training to formal and informal mentors and all program staff. All training will adhere to Big Brothers Big Sisters of America Standards which require that volunteers, parents and children receive education and training on child sexual abuse prevention at the time of enrollment, with annual updates thereafter. Based on effective prevention practice research by experts in the field, BBBS has developed volunteer, parent and child education materials including recommended resources on child abuse prevention, bullying prevention and internet safety from outside organizations such as: Prevent Child Abuse America, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, Nonprofit Risk Management Center. To achieve the greatest effectiveness in building children's personal safety skills, the messages contained in the education and training of program participants at enrollment are reinforced regularly through match support structures. For more information (See BBBS Mentor Training Attachment).

d. [Assessing fiscal accountability and faithful implementation of project plans;](#)

Financial accountability and organizational oversight are key components of the United Way organization. Stewards of over a million dollars annually, the United Way's Board has approved Financial and Accounting policies for use by employees. United Way will act for the good and betterment of the organization, exercise reasonable care in decision-making and not place the program or organization under unnecessary risk. The United Way will strive to be objective, honest, trustworthy, reasonable and efficient. United Way's Chief Financial officer will administer all funds associated with this grant and will ensure compliance with applicable regulatory requirements. We will provide monthly review of all financial income and expenditures and also documents governing the implementation of this program.

e. [Any other critical information you would want Community Connectors team to know.](#)

As a result of youth input, an artistic rendering of proposed space is included in attachments. Even the renovation process will be mentor driven so youth are full partners in creating the space they will use for future mentoring. This project will support all districts in meeting Ohio's new career advising and dropout prevention requirements in a manner that can be sustained long term locally, and replicated in Ohio.

[12. Describe how partners plans to contribute to the overall program plan including, but not limited to, time contribution, personnel contribution, monetary contribution, shared responsibilities, use of facilities, etc. Complete the Roles and Responsibilities worksheet attachment.](#)

Given the depth and diversity of UW-FC partnerships, please see attached Roles and Responsibilities Worksheet.

Application Section III: Evaluation Plan

[13. The evaluation plan is intended to provide lead organizations with a framework that will ensure program is on track to positively impact the lives of students and identify needs for additional support when challenges arise. Each evaluation plan must list the scope of work and describe the following:](#)

Evaluation Scope of Work: Project Director, with support from Evaluation Manager and BBBS, will manage Evaluation that will consist of process and outcomes data collection and reporting. Process data collection and reporting will include (but is not limited to): minutes/attendance at planning sessions; information regarding extent to which activities are completed on time and the project stays within budget; training evaluations; student and volunteer recruitment plan completion and strategies for improving processes and outcomes. Outcome data will be directly aligned to success indicators described below. Evaluation Manager will provide a Progress Monitoring Tool that will track process and outcomes data for reporting. Student attendance and referral program will be purchased to monitor individual member data for reporting and participation records.

a. **Plans for keeping records of mentor contact hours, unduplicated count of students served each month, mentor training hours, etc. for ongoing reporting;**

Project will purchase computer program to track student data and monitor attendance. Students will sign in/out. Programs supervisors will provide attendance for number of students served (unduplicated counts)/month. Youth who receive a formal mentor will be enrolled into BBBS or another partner organization for formal mentoring. That program will report number of hours of contact per month between student and their mentor each month to Project Director for ongoing reporting.

b. **Gathering of data to measure progress of program towards meeting the selected goals;**

Project Director will use Progress Monitoring Tool (from Evaluation Manager) to track activity progress and completion for monthly and quarterly data collection. Evaluation Manager will assist Project Director in ongoing process and outcome management. Monthly: data collection for process/outcomes evaluation; reports to Leadership Team for use during planning and evaluation sessions (twice/month) Quarterly: process/outcomes reports to Leadership Team and United Way. During Year 1 Project Director, Evaluation Manager, United Way Director and BBBS will meet twice a month to develop, implement and fine tune reporting systems. Years 2 and 3 meetings will occur monthly. Project Monitoring Tool will be web based so all partners can access information and keep track of progress towards identified goals. BBBS Youth Outcome Survey will be administered upon intake to all members and annually thereafter. Post training evaluations surveys will track participation and outcomes from mentors (formal/informal) and program staff who participate in trainings. At least annually, members and frequent drop ins will participate in locally designed program surveys and focus groups to determine program satisfaction and garner new ideas for improving program success.

c. **Projected indicators of success;** and

Enrollment: Y1: 100 members/500 drop ins. Y2: 200 members/1000 drop ins. Y3: 300 members/1800 drop in

Principles of Hope #1 (Goal Setting for 21st Century Careers). Youth Outcomes: Annually, 75% of *Center* members will meet one personal goal created through annual intake meetings. Measurement: *Connections* student management data system. Baseline: 0

Principles of Hope #2 (Character building). Youth Outcome: By 6/2018, average 200 youth per/week will receive informal mentoring through *Center* activities. Measurement: *Connections* student management data system. Baseline: 0.

Community Outcome: By June 2018, at least 50 informal mentors will volunteer once a month at *Connections Youth Center*. Measurement: Mentor Attendance records. Baseline: 0.

Principles of Hope #3 (Pathways to Achievement) Youth Outcome: Active *Center* members for at least two years, will report increased post-secondary education aspiration. Measurement: BBBS Youth Outcome Survey. Baseline: 0.

Community Outcome: Annually, *Center* will increase 10% in **Learn** programs aligned to Career Advising/Student Success. Measurement: Partner list, quarterly program calendar. Baseline: 0.

Principles of Hope #4 (Building a Sense of Resiliency) Youth Outcomes: *Center* members for 2+ years, report increased social acceptance and healthier attitudes towards risk taking behaviors. Measurement: BBBS Youth Outcome Survey. Baseline: 0.

Community Outcome: By 6/2018, Mall will report 50% decrease in number of youth who have lost mall privileges due to poor behavior/misconduct. Measurement: Mall records. Baseline 2014: 40

Principles of Hope #5 (Believing in Positive Future). Youth Outcome: Active *Center* members for at least two years, will report increased post-secondary education aspiration. Measurement: BBBS Youth Outcome Survey. Baseline: 0.

Community Outcome: Each year, *Connections* will show 20% increase in number of partners providing **Thrive** programs aligned to district Career Advising/Student Success policies. Baseline: 0.

d. [Anticipated barriers to successful evaluation including outcomes collection/measurement.](#)

Local capacity to effectively complete evaluation tasks is a barrier. United Way (UW-FC) will contract with Evaluation Manager to create and implement Progress Monitoring Tool and support Director in collecting and managing data effectively. Progress Monitoring Tool will be refined over time to provide high quality, useful data. BBBS will provide outcomes data to the project through its survey tools for youth and mentors (See Youth Outcome Survey Attachments). Assessing student and community perception of the program success is a barrier. Outcomes monitoring will include both formative and summative data. This will help partners see changes in small increments that may not be noticeable through more in depth perception surveys. Youth Focus Groups will also be used to ensure student perspective is captured regularly throughout the process.

14. [Applicants are to complete the program model.](#)

See attached Program Model.

Application Section IV: Sustainability

15. [Describe how you plan to maintain the program after the grant funding period. Include a discussion about financial sustainability and sustainability of the partnership commitment. Applicants are not required to include cash as part of their local contributions; however, funding sustainability is critical to the Community Connectors program. Applicants that show the potential for funding sustainability will be given preference in application scoring.](#)

By 2020, UW-FC plans for *Connections Youth Center* to be self sustaining as an independent not-for-profit organization jointly run by youth and adults. *Connections* will require more funds to operate than will be available through Community Connectors Grant. Partners have already gone together and secured funds to support grant writing efforts for this and other grants. As demonstrated in Budget Narrative, additional cash match is provided by partners during year 2 and year 3, showing a strong financial commitment to this project. As a United Way program, *Connections* will have access to local and national funders that can leverage resources typically unavailable to start up organizations.

Upon award, a sustainability subcommittee will be formed to design and implement strategies to ensure the Center is fiscally and programmatically sustainable. Responsibilities include fundraising for ongoing operational expenses, developing new partnerships to create new programs, youth recruitment and creation of a 501(c)3 organization. Partners will write for a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant to expand services. United Way will consider possible future funding and will coordinate grant writing to sustain the project long-term. Districts will provide access to technology and tech resources to the site which will decrease ongoing operational costs. River Valley Mall is very excited about this project and is not actively searching for other tenants for this space which has been empty for nearly 10 years. While the space is a great location for a Youth Center there are very few businesses that would be interested in the space. The mall is also donating a portion of the rent to United Way. As youth age out, sustainability team will develop strategies to continue to engage them as mentors, contributors, volunteers, board members and youth employers. Through

this process Connections will be truly sustainable. Young people whose lives have been touched by the Center will be ready, willing and able to give back and support the next generation's youth.

See *Budget Narrative for additional sustainability information. Each budget item has specific description regarding how that particular expense will be sustained beyond the length of this grant.*

Application Section V: Program Budget

16. Complete the budget form attachment and justify each of the budget items by creating a budget justification.

See attached.

By clicking this box, x I (Insert Name) Sherry Orlando agree, on behalf of this applicant, and any or all identified partners, that this application and all supporting documents contain information approved by a relevant executive board or its equivalent.