



Cedar Valley United Way

# SOCIAL INNOVATION

**CEDAR VALLEY UNITED WAY HAS SOCIAL INNOVATION INVESTMENT FUNDS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT NEW, INNOVATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS THAT ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES OF HEALTH AND HUMAN NEEDS ISSUES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE CYCLE OF POVERTY IN THE CEDAR VALLEY.**

The Social Innovation funding category is intended as an impact accelerator, which invests money and resources in promising social ventures focused on solutions that address root causes of systemic poverty through collaborative efforts.

Social Innovation refers to new products, services and ways of working that meet social needs and strengthen our community.

While Cedar Valley United Way proudly supports established nonprofits that provide much needed products and services in our community, we realize it is not always feasible or prudent for these organizations to change course or divert resources to explore a new initiative. With that in mind, Social Innovation investments are unique in three ways:

- **INNOVATION:** Social Innovation investments enable new or existing organizations that place social impact at the heart of their business model to apply for funding for groundbreaking ventures and/or research.
- **TIMEFRAME:** The open, flexible and competitive application process is completed quickly, saving valuable time and resources that are scarce for an early-stage venture.
- **COLLABORATION:** Social Innovation investments promote the leveraging of resources in our community through collaborative efforts that enable multi-disciplinary, holistic and larger-scale approaches.

These Social Innovation investments may take place outside the traditional two-year funding cycle for education, health and financial stability grants, with the intent to encourage holistic approaches to impacting the identified critical root issues.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- Must serve residents living within a 30-mile radius of Waterloo.
- Must maintain 501(c)(3) status, or if not a 501(c)(3), must have a fiscal sponsor within the status.
- Must be able to clearly identify the goals for learning or social change and how progress will be monitored.
- Must address a demonstrated root community issue.
- Must seek desired outcomes with measurable results, or if research-focused, exhibit what will be learned and how the group intends to respond to that learning.
- Must involve a collaborative meeting with Cedar Valley United Way prior to written proposal to discuss project goals, and to determine whether the project aligns with social innovation priorities as defined above.
- Must receive an invitation to submit a proposal from Cedar Valley United Way.

Funding is limited, and will be awarded to projects or programs that demonstrate the above criteria.

Please note: Cedar Valley United Way does not support capital assets with our Social Innovation grants. Social Innovation grant applications will not be accepted during strategic investment and emergency and basic needs investment application process.

For more information, or to schedule a meeting, contact Nilvia Reyes Rodriguez, Director of Community Impact and Engagement at 319-235-6211 or [nilviarr@cvuw.org](mailto:nilviarr@cvuw.org).

**IT TAKES COLLECTIVE IMPACT TO TACKLE THESE ISSUES. TOGETHER, WE ARE CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE.**

**LEARN MORE AT [WWW.CEDARVALLEYUNITEDWAY.ORG](http://WWW.CEDARVALLEYUNITEDWAY.ORG).**



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## **SOCIAL INNOVATION PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: THE ROAD HOME PROJECT (ONE CEDAR VALLEY)**



It is estimated between 70 million and 100 million—or as many as one in three Americans—have some type of criminal record. Even a minor criminal record, such as a misdemeanor or even an arrest without conviction, often results in lifelong barriers that stand in the way of successful re-entry. This has broad implications for individuals' and families' economic security, as well as for our local economy as a large portion of these neighbors are on supervised release (parole/probation).

The Department of Corrections reported that the overwhelming majority of lowans on supervised release have at most a high school education. Across the nation, most people on probation are on the brink of or are currently experiencing poverty: about two-thirds of people on probation are estimated to make less than \$20,000 annually. This poverty hinders not only the ability to care for oneself but absent adequate income, people are more likely to rely on public assistance. Additionally, the need

to pay fines and fees can result in a person having to choose between family necessities (such as a license, due to fines and fees), food and shelter.

Approximately 95 percent of current justice-impacted community members in custody in Iowa will be re-entering society at some point. Within a five-year period, approximately 71% of individuals released from incarceration return (recidivism), while 72% cannot find full-time employment, highlighting a direct connection between full-time employment and recidivism. Ironically, according to the Society for Human Resource Management, 82% of managers report that the value second chance employees bring to their organization is as high as, or higher than, that of workers without a background.

Creating meaningful support programs and career opportunities for justice-involved neighbors increases the possibility of a successful reentry, assists with building Iowa's workforce and increases public safety in our communities. Road Home provides comprehensive resources for a successful reentry to decrease income inequality and reduce recidivism. We believe all who want to actively engage in our workforce to earn a family-sustaining wage, should have the access and opportunity to do so. With evidence-based, comprehensive re-entry support and programming, we are creating transformative career development ecosystems.

The goal of Road Home's 16-step life skills program is to improve the lives of justice-impacted neighbors and their families through education, positive exposure, personal assessment, mentorship and a strong connection to community resources and wrap around support. Road Home aims to reduce cycles of recidivism with holistic, equitable and evidence-informed re-entry services. Postincarceration programming was found to reduce recidivism by at least 30%.

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