



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OUAC SEEKS COMMUNITY PARTNER TO PROVIDE NEXT PHASE OF CRITICAL SERVICES FOR THOSE IMPACTED BY PULSE TRAGEDY

ORLANDO, FLA. (July 21, 2020) –Orlando United Assistance Center (OUAC) today announces it is seeking a letter of interest (LOI) from qualified entities to continue serving and supporting immediate family members of those taken in the Pulse tragedy, survivors and first responders.

Beginning in February, the OUAC, a collaboration between the Heart of Florida United Way, City of Orlando, Orange County Government and Osceola County Government, commissioned research including a survey outreach initiative in order to identify and better understand the long-term needs of the impacted community.

The research team’s findings reveal that a large majority of those in the impacted community want services to continue for at least the next five years in the following areas:

- Mental and Physical Health: Sustained mental health services; primary care; dental services; physical therapy for injuries
- Monetary: Financial assistance; job assistance; housing assistance
- Support groups: Group therapy; music therapy; health and fitness; spiritual guidance

“In considering the research team’s findings, the collaborative partnership determined it is most appropriate to seek letters of interest for the next iteration of the OUAC and choose a new managing entity to serve the impacted community.”, says Ray Larsen, vice president of community impact for the Heart of Florida United Way. “The Heart of Florida United Way has had the honor of managing the OUAC for the past four years. This collaborative partnership has and will continue to keep the OUAC services running until the new managing entity is secured, making for a smooth transition with no interruption to the critical services or resources. Entities that are able to seamlessly incorporate OUAC employees and current service continuum with its own existing provided services, are preferred.”

To qualify, service providers will have to meet specific criterion identified both in the research findings and in the literature, including:

- Provide a core set of services from a centralized organization and augment with referrals to partnering providers;
- Competency and history of working with the population most affected by the tragedy;
- Trauma informed practices to promote recovery and resiliency;
- Ability to collaborate with other community organizations and groups;
- Ability to provide leadership in community setting;
- History of securing funding and ability to secure future funding from federal, state, local, and/or private grants, as well as building relationships with individual donors and other fundraising methods;
- Ability to develop and organize a virtual, one-stop service delivery model; and,



Heart of Florida United Way

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- Ability to effectively communicate with the impacted community and maintain awareness for the OUAC amongst those who are eligible for services as well as the public-at-large.

The LOI must be sent to Ray Larsen at the Heart of Florida United Way at ray.larsen@hfuw.org by 5 p.m. on August 5 for consideration.

Community volunteers Dr. Erica Fissel of the University of Central Florida and Zachary Murray, M.S., led the research effort to directly connect with and learn from the individuals and families the OUAC serves. Participation included the voluntary opportunity to complete an anonymous online survey. The survey also allowed for community members to share their insights, many of which supported the needs of the impacted community. There was an expressed interest by community members for services to be available to everyone in the community and that has been relayed in the LOI request. Organizations who wish to submit a letter of intent can find more information [\[ADD LINK\]](#).

You can read the research report here [\[ADD LINK\]](#) and can learn more about the OUAC at www.orlandounitedassistancecenter.org.

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About the OUAC: *The Orlando United Assistance Center (OUAC) was established in the immediate aftermath of the Pulse tragedy, evolving operations from initial family reunification at the Hampton Inn & Suites to the Family Assistance Center at Camping World Stadium offering robust information, support and resources to those directly affected. Located in downtown Orlando, the OUAC now serves as a centralized location offering services and support to aid in the physical and emotional healing of those who were present at Pulse on June 12, survivors and the immediate families of those taken. The dedicated OUAC staff are diverse, culturally experienced, trauma-informed, LGBTQ-affirming representatives of the Hispanic community. A collaboration between the Heart of Florida United Way, City of Orlando, Orange County Government, Osceola County Government and the Central Florida Foundation, the OUAC connects individuals and families to critical community resources.*

About the Heart of Florida United Way: *Founded in 1939, Heart of Florida United Way is Central Florida's largest supporter of local health and human service agencies. In 2016-2017, it managed more than \$46 million dollars in total resources, including over \$17.7 million raised during the annual campaign that helps fund nearly 60 local health and human service programs. It also operates the [United Way 2-1-1 Information and Assistance helpline](#), the [EITC tax credit initiative](#), [Mission United](#), [Destination Graduation](#), the [Volunteer Resource Center](#) and the [Ryan White Part B/General Revenue Program](#). United Way is focused on prevention and finding long-term solutions for pressing problems. Known as Investing in Results, this philosophy is guiding our work to move the needle in four critical impact areas: education, health, financial stability and basic needs.*

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