

## **Request for Letters of Interest** **Orlando United Assistance Center**

A collaboration of community funders (Collaboration) seeks letters of interest (LOI) from mission-driven, nonprofit community-based organizations desiring to become the operator of the Orlando United Assistance Center (OUAC). The objective for the next iteration of the OUAC will be to improve upon delivery, navigation and coordination of community resources to continue to serve those impacted by the tragedy who are seeking services, either continued or new individuals in need. LOIs will need to demonstrate the following criteria:

- 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.
- Secure future funding to continue services through grants, individual donors, and other fundraising methods.
- 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 applicant must provide a sample communications plan that includes measurable objectives, target audiences, outreach strategies and tactics, and available financial and human resources to implement the communications plan.

Questions may be submitted to Ray Larsen at [ray.larsen@HFUW.org](mailto:ray.larsen@HFUW.org). LOIs should be submitted electronically to the Collaborative at [ray.larsen@hfuw.org](mailto:ray.larsen@hfuw.org) by 5:00pm on Wednesday, August 5, 2020.

### **Overview**

In response to the deadly mass shooting at the Pulse nightclub, the Orlando United Assistance Center (OUAC) was established on July 11, 2016. Its operations evolved 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 impacted. Located in downtown Orlando, the OUAC now serves as a centralized location and navigation point to assess needs, provide information and coordinate support that will aid in the physical and emotional healing of the immediate families of those who were taken, survivors and first responders.

For the first six months, the OUAC was operated by Orange County in collaboration with the City of Orlando and several other onsite community partners. The operations of the OUAC was soon transitioned to the Heart of Florida United Way. In late 2016, the community was awarded a federal grant from the Anti-Terrorism Emergency Assistance Program (AEAP), which funded many of the much-needed services within the community. At that time, the top services included mental health services, financial assistance and legal services.

Several jurisdictions and organizations were awarded funding through this federal award. Overall grant reporting and OUAC operations was then coordinated by the Heart of Florida United Way (HFUW). The HFUW remains in this capacity today.

With the OUAC moving to its fourth year, a collaboration current stakeholders and funders, Orange County, HFUW, Central Florida Foundation, City of Orlando and Osceola County determined that it would be appropriate to conduct a formal research initiative to anticipate and understand the long-term needs of

the immediate families of those who were taken, survivors and first responders. Data for this initiative was to be collected through:

- 1) anonymous surveys completed by those who are eligible to receive services from the OUAC, which would focus on obtaining feedback on the services and resources utilized, along with their current and anticipated needs, and;
- 2) a series of confidential in-person focus groups to further explore those needs in a more conversational setting.

Research commenced on February 7, 2020. 115 individuals, including community members, survivors and family members and friends of victims, employees working at the time, first responders, friends of survivors, employees not working at the time and second responders responded to the survey. The research team was able to isolate responses from those directly impacted (n = 72), removing community members from its analysis.

The survey attempted to understand the need for on-going services of the OUAC and to determine the next iteration of the Center. On average, respondents reported using approximately 1.3 services provided by OUAC. The survey indicated an ongoing need for the following services:

- Mental health services
- Financial assistance
- Transportation assistance

**The large majority of those in the impacted community (per survey results) wants OUAC services to continue for more than 5 years from now.**

**Respondents specifically indicated their needs moving forward as:**

- Mental health
- Financial assistance
- Help getting disability
- Job assistance
- Physical therapy
- Housing assistance
- Support Groups (including music / exercise / fitness classes)
- Primary care services (dental, medical, etc.)

The survey did not, however, indicate whether or not any of these services were received onsite at the OUAC or if respondents were navigated to community resources by staff at the OUAC. It is likely the latter, as there are very few on-site services at the OUAC, as its primary role is to case manage referrals and navigate the needs of those affected by the tragedy.

While the research team intends to further understand onsite usage through focus groups, this portion of the research initiative is currently on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic. Focus groups may resume once it has become safe for individuals to gather in groups, and a combined analysis of the research initiative will be published and made available to the public once it has been completed.

### **Eligibility**

Organizations submitting LOIs need to meet minimum criteria including, but is not limited to:

- Is a not-for-profit organization, has Articles of Incorporation and exemption from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3).
- Has current board of directors list with terms of officers and affiliations, and minutes of the last six board meetings.

- Has most recent annual certified audit or financial statements and annual report reports containing the auditors communication of findings, internal control deficiencies and/or weaknesses along with the organization's response to those matters.
- Has IRS Form 990 or 990EZ.
- Has current fiscal year budget.
- Demonstrated fundraising ability and financial strength.
- Viewed as a trusted organization by the affected community.
- Has stated policies of nondiscrimination and complies with all the requirements of state and federal laws and regulations on nondiscrimination and equal opportunity, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), with respect to clients, officers, employees, and volunteers.
- Has a strategic plan and leadership succession plan.
- Does not knowingly employ individuals or contribute funds to organizations found on terrorist-related lists officially announced by the U.S. Government, the United Nations or the European Union. Can submit certification to HFUW indicating compliance with the spirit and intent of the U.S.A. Patriot Act and other counterterrorism laws as requested.
- Has a demonstrated expertise with the initiative/program covered in the request for LOIs.

### **Other Considerations**

Entities able to seamlessly incorporate OUAC employees and current service continuum with its own existing provided services are preferred.

If the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant is received, the awarded agency of the OUAC contract must have the ability to administer all grant activities.

The survey included community members that were not directly impacted by the tragedy. Will the continued work support the community at large or will it be focused to those directly impacted by the tragedy and thus verified by the FBI list that was generated in 2016?

What is the need at this time for actual financial assistance and how is that justified and distributed and where will it come from?