

## Gilchrist County School District - Pre-K Scholarship Program

### Program Information

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**Program** Pre-K Scholarship Program

### Select From the Following

**New Program to Agency** ☐

**Existing Program to Agency** ☒

**Select UWNCFL Impact Area** Education

**Please provide a brief description of the concept of your program and how it aligns with the impact area chosen above.**

The program focuses on education, but has a concomitant impact on the areas of health and income as well. The program will fund fees for disadvantaged families that will support enrollment in full-day pre-k services. Children who will be 4 on or before Sept 1 of each school year are eligible for 1/2 day of free VPK. However, a large portion of needy families do not have the resources to pick up a child in the middle of the day. Those who do so are not able to work at steady jobs. This program will provide scholarships so that students who would only receive 1/2 day of services will be able to receive a full day, and those who would not be able to access services AT ALL will now be able to do so. This also links those families up with resources such as free meals, free dental, vision, and health screenings, migrant services, after-school programs, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. We are requesting enough funding to serve 60 families.

**Number of Years in Operation** 13

**Describe how your program will impact your selected performance measures based on measures and details provided in the Resource Center on your page.**

The proposed program will increase the number of disadvantaged children that are able to receive full-day prekindergarten services through leveraging United Way funding and allowing students to access free resources that would otherwise be unavailable to them. In addition, the proposed program will improve the proportion of children that enter school with the knowledge and skills needed to be successful throughout their school career and beyond. Data indicate that previous students who have participated in this pre-kindergarten program have been able to achieve school readiness and were still on grade level upon subsequent measurement in the third grade. Third grade achievement is statistically correlated with subsequent school achievement, graduation rates, and college enrollment.

The condition of the community and surrounding areas will be improved through strategically investing funds into the proposed program, with subsequent impact for educational success, health, and economic stability.

**Clearly describe the results your proposed program services/activities can achieve as they align to the selected performance measures**

Students who have participated in this program in the past have demonstrated sustained academic proficiency. Through this program, we will expand those results to a higher number of disadvantaged children.

The program that they will have access to is a high quality program. In the past five years, the program has consistently earned Readiness rates in the top 10%. In the most recent year, 97% of the children that participated in this program were assessed and determined "ready" to enter Kindergarten.

Over the past three year cycle, over 100 total students have been served through United Way. Using the most recent year's data, the VPK Assessment 2, given in January 2021, indicates the following percentages are likely to score "Ready" for Kindergarten: 49.5% Print Knowledge, 70.5% in Phonological Awareness, 75% in Oral Language/Vocabulary, and 33.5% in Mathematics.

Fall 2020 FLKRS data indicated that 51% of GCSD students scored as proficient, whereas 55% of students were proficient if they attended our preschool program. These numbers are lower than in the past due to school closures during the 2019-2020 school year as a result of COVID-19.

**Specify the number and demographics of the people that will be served through your program.**

This program will serve 60 preschool age children and families at two Title I elementary school campuses. Based on historical data, we expect the targeted population will be 87.5% White, 4.3% Black, 5.4% Hispanic, .5% Asian, and 2.2% MultiRacial. In addition, projections based on current data indicate an almost even split of gender, with 54% male and 46% female. School data indicate that high percentages (70%) of students are from low-income families. Students served will primarily come from the 32693 and 32619 zip code areas; however, this program does serve some out-of-county students from surrounding districts, including Alachua.

**Describe the need for your program using local data**

Our schools have one of the highest number of students with disabilities in the state (24%). The median income is almost \$10,000 less than state average. The average travel time to get to work is also higher than state average. Many of our families either do not work or work out of county. Employment is often minimum wage. Only 11% of the population has a Bachelors' degree, versus a state average of 26%. The obesity rate of our population is higher than state average, and families are in need of obesity screenings. In addition, families are in need of dental, vision, and hearing screenings.

**Select county(s) served**

Alachua ☐

Bradford ☐

Dixie ☐

Gilchrist ☒

Levy ☐

Union ☐

**Please include percent of services provided to each county served (i.e. 60% Alachua County residents, 15% Bradford, etc.)**

The program is in Gilchrist County and primarily serves families that reside in Gilchrist County.

However, families may also reside in and/or work in surrounding counties, including Dixie, Levy, and Alachua.

## Collaborative Approach

**Describe your program's partners/funders and how you work with them. Please list up to 7 significant program partners, including type of organization and how you work with them (Example: YMCA - nonprofit - provides space for program activities)**

The Gilchrist County School District will partner with United Way to pay fees for disadvantaged families that will allow their children access to quality educational programming in a quantity and quality equitable to that of non-disadvantaged families. In addition to this partnership, the Gilchrist County School District will collaborate with various other stakeholders and agencies in order to provide the best level of services possible. For example, children who are enrolled in this program will be able to access free dental, vision, and hearing screenings through the local Health Department and school clinic programs. Obesity screenings will be provided as well. The state's VPK program will fund 1/2 day of service for eligible children, with the other 1/2 of the day being supported through United Way funding. Collaboration with the district's Special Programs department will ensure that students are able to receive speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or other related services if needed. In addition, collaboration with the Alachua Multi-District Migrant Program will ensure that migrant families are able to receive supplemental services in alignment with those needs.

Families who live in homeless situations will be provided with services and resources through the Title I program, in alignment with the McKinney Vento Act. All students will receive free breakfast and lunch through the involvement of the district's Food Service program and the National School Lunch Program. Participating students that enroll in the afterschool program will receive free snacks as well.

**Provide specific details on any new roles or responsibilities that will be assumed by all parties involved if this program is funded.**

If this program is funded, involved parties will continue in the important role that each contributes to the program. However, the services that each partner provides will be expanded to a much larger group of disadvantaged families. Our hope is that the partnerships and integration of services among these groups will continue to grow and expand each year. All efforts are being made to create a continuum of care for these families that will support their efforts to become self-sustaining, economically stable, healthy, educated members of society.

**Does another agency provide the same or similar programs?** No

**If yes, what differentiates your program from theirs?**

## Program Challenges

**How have services changed or been impacted by COVID?**

The proposed program is a huge need for our small, rural area. A lot of resources that were previously available for families, now are not due to COVID. In an area such as Gilchrist County, resources such as this proposed program have a huge impact.

Many of our families work outside of the district, with jobs in Dixie, Levy, and Alachua counties.

Partnerships in these counties will strengthen the programs we are able to offer, and support a better educated, healthier, and more financially stable workforce for the entire region.

In addition, the VPK Assessment Period 3 (AP3) for the 2019-2020 school year was unable to be given and affects our data (accurate performance measures).

**What other barriers have your program encountered?**

The need for a program of this type is clearly demonstrated. Gilchrist County schools have very high percentages of low-income parents, the highest percentage of students with disabilities in the state, and large numbers of families that are unable to participate in our programs due to lack of the financial means. The scholarships provided through this program will not only allow a much higher number of children to receive services, they will also ensure that parents are involved in their child's education and that they receive much needed parental training. In addition, this program will allow parents to work and support their families because they will have care for their children during the day and won't have the cost of day care.

In addition, Fall 2020 FLKRS data indicated that 51% of GCSD students scored as proficient, whereas 55% of students were proficient if they attended our preschool program. These numbers are lower than in the past due to school closures during the 2019-2020 school year as a result of COVID-19.

### **Previously Funded Programs**

**Has this program  
received UWNCFL grant  
funding in  
the past?** Yes

**If yes, please provide the year(s) the program received funding and the amount per year(s).  
Include information regarding achievement of the funded program's prior year outputs and  
outcomes.**

We have previously received United Way support for this program, and the outcomes have been very successful. The program was first piloted in 2008-09, with growth in funding and numbers of families served in years since.

Participating children that were supported through United Way funds in the past have demonstrated success. Assessment scores indicated that over half of these children were going to enter Kindergarten "ready" and on grade level. This number is slightly down than previous years due to school closures as a result of COVID-19. United Way funding and support has increased over the years, and we value the opportunity to continue that expansion and partnership.

### **Amount Requested**

**Total Program Expense** 86,400.00

**Intended Request Amount** 86,400.00  
**from UWNCFL**