

**Attachment A
LOI Cover Page**

Contact Information

Organization Name: Community Sharing Program
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 351
City/State: Cottage Grove, Oregon **Zip:** 97424
Contact Name: Barbara Butzer **Title:** Executive Director
Phone: 541-942-2176 **Email:** Barbara@communitysharing.org
Website: www.communitysharing.org **Fax #:** 541-767-0373

Organizational Information

Mission Statement: Community Sharing provides a basic needs safety net to residents of South Lane County.

No. of Employees: 8 **FTE:** 5.3
No. of Volunteers (annually)/ Volunteer Hours (annually) 70+ / 11,556
Name of Executive Director: Barbara Butzer
Name of Board President: Amy Callahan **Term Ending Date:** 6/30/10
Number of members on Board of Directors: 12
Total Agency Budget: \$393,837 **Fiscal Year End:** June 30
Geographic Service South Lane, including Creswell and Cottage Grove
Unduplicated Lane County Residents Served Last Year: 5,339
Has your organization been previously funded by UWLC? No Yes, Year(s) Since 1990

Proposed Service(s): Name of Proposed Services: Improving Financial Stability for Rural South Lane Residents



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Community Sharing Program
PO Box 351 Cottage Grove, OR 97424
Ph: 541-942-2176 Fax: 541-767-0373

January 10, 2010

Lorelei Cesario, Director of Community Impact
United Way of Lane County
3171 Gateway Loop
Springfield, OR 97477

Dear Lorelei –

Re: Letter of Intent for Strategic/Preventive Funding 2010

Please accept this Letter of Intent as evidence of Community Sharing's desire to partner with United Way of Lane County in moving families from poverty to financial stability. Below we will outline briefly how the mission and goals of our agency align with those of United Way and how the high rate of generational and situational poverty in South Lane County makes it essential that we look for new opportunities to address the causes of poverty in our communities.

Community Sharing Program's mission is to provide a basic needs safety net to residents of South Lane County. When the Bohemia Mill in rural Dorena closed in 1983, concerned citizens of Cottage Grove stepped up to provide direct food assistance and information for out of work mill workers who, after a lifetime of steady work in the mill, had little idea of how to access public services or retrain for other jobs. That assistance shared by neighbors was the start of Community Sharing, and the spirit of neighbor helping neighbor remains today. Community Sharing is the only basic human needs safety net in South Lane County, and we are truly a place where sharing occurs. We are an invited applicant for the Basic Needs funding provided by United Way of Lane County in 2010.

Despite our efforts to meet the basic needs of all our neighbors in the South Lane area, we find that unemployment, hunger and poverty are persistent and increasing. In December, 2009 our requests for holiday meals and gifts increased by 25% over the prior year. We receive ten requests for housing assistance for every one that we can help. The fall 2009 sign up list for low-income energy assistance resulted in 1000 people on the waiting list, and it is unlikely that resources will be sufficient to serve more than half.



A United Way Agency

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More people in South Lane are living in poverty for several reasons: generally high unemployment throughout the region (60% of Cottage Grove workers commute to Eugene/Springfield for their jobs); continuing high unemployment in South Lane, where mills continue to close or slow to nearly a halt (Bald Knob, StarFire, Weyerhaeuser and others); unemployed or marginally employed people moving to South Lane to find lower-cost housing, too often in sub-standard housing in rural areas; and a general belief that life on a budget is easier in a rural area. Community Sharing is committed to working with the U.S. Census Bureau to coordinate a thorough 2010 Census count that will reflect statistically, rather than anecdotally, these trends that we witness at our office.

In 2009 Community Sharing began to increase its involvement with local and regional economic development activities. The Executive Director attended Lane Work Force Partnership summits and gave direct input to regional planning strategies. She recognized the possible benefits of the Opportunity Conference for some clients of Community Sharing and offered to coordinate South Lane County's participation in the event. Our Hispanic Family Advocate, currently funded through United Way, will translate the conference materials. A Community Sharing staff member traveled to Portland for the Poverty Bridge training, and she has shared her learning with our full staff.

Community Sharing also increased the ability of local families, primarily those who are the "working poor," to access training in budget and financial management, good tenant skills, gardening for sustainability, and food preparation skills. We partner with a variety of non-profit and government agencies to provide these classes, and we opened new classroom space in November 2009 to ensure easy class access for our clients and other low-income community members.

United Way is providing leadership in the effort to look "up stream" on poverty and to intercede in areas where families can be strengthened before slipping into poverty. Community Sharing Program recognizes the value of a pro-active and holistic approach. While direct services to people in need will always be the major component of our mission, our Board supports our involvement in effort to reduce poverty by helping families gain financial stability, access to healthcare, and increased training/education.

Community Sharing Program is requesting consideration for a small amount of annual funding to help us bring economic opportunity to families in South Lane County. We are requesting \$6,650 annually, with nearly half of that amount (\$3,000 annually) earmarked for class tuition in financial literacy and successful tenant skills for the "working poor." We currently use CSBG-ARRA (Federal stimulus funds) to pay for tuition; however, those funds are expected to disappear 7/1/10 and we have no other source to replace them at this time.

The remaining requested funds (\$3,350 annually) would be used for Agency Capacity Building, as we continue to involve Community Sharing in regional and local efforts to "move the needle" on Income Strategies for South Lane residents. In year one of the funding cycle, key staff members would attend the Prosperity Planner training and incorporate it into their daily work with the target population; one staff member (who has

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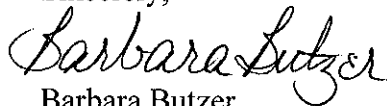
participated in the Poverty 101 training already) would use her “trainer” skills to present poverty awareness training several times to community members; and the Executive Director would travel to Eugene to connect South Lane County with regional efforts, building partnerships with Lane Work Force Partnership, United Way’s Financial Stability team, and the continuing financial stabilization work that will emerge from the Opportunity Conference. She would also participate on Cottage Grove’s Economic Development committee, where she could provide a pragmatic perspective on efforts to create local jobs through small business development and worker training.

In subsequent years, the United Way funds would be used to continue partnerships and build on local and regional economic development efforts (yet to be determined). Financial management skill building would continue to be a key piece of our toolbox for clients.

Financial support for agency capacity building at Community Sharing is essential. We operate with slim staffing (5.3 FTE), and nearly all of those hours are directly assigned to specific tasks governed by a contract. Few flexible hours are available for our staff to engage in regional planning efforts or training that broadens their perspectives on anti-poverty work. We are therefore requesting Strategic Investment funding through United Way of Lane County.

Thank you for the opportunity to present information about South Lane County’s human and economic needs, and Community Sharing’s plans to address them in conjunction with United Way of Lane County.

Sincerely,



Barbara Butzer
Executive Director



Amy Callahan
Board President