



## FOCUS FUND

United Way of Tompkins County helps people meet their immediate, basic needs while creating lasting change by strengthening the three building blocks for a good life: education, financial stability and health.

**EDUCATION:** Children and youth succeed in school, work and life.

**FINANCIAL STABILITY:** Individuals and families have improved financial stability and self-sufficiency.

**HEALTH:** Children, seniors and adults have improved physical, emotional, and mental well-being.

### PURPOSE

FOCUS is an extension of the UWTC's Youth and Philanthropy program. UWTC volunteers and staff work for several weeks with local elementary and middle school students on leadership, development activities, reviewing community needs, and a hosting competitive grant process for their town.

The FOCUS program was established with the goal of engaging younger students in local philanthropic efforts. Through this program, students participate in consensus building activities, review grant applications, conduct interviews, and deliberate about how to award funds.

Since the program's beginning in 2002, the towns of Dryden, Caroline, Newfield, Groton, Enfield, Trumansburg, Danby and Lansing have all hosted FOCUS programs. To date, students have donated over \$34,000 to nonprofit organizations.

Applications will be evaluated based upon the following criteria:

- *Need:* The community need is clearly defined and demonstrated.
- *Impact:* Community impact is made through specific measurable goals and outcomes. The program is intended to make a significant, sustainable impact.
- *Implementation:* The program is thoughtful, realistic, and clearly addresses the identified community need. The organization(s) are able to execute the work effectively (have a plan to meet the needed capacity).
- *Creativity and Innovation:* The organization(s) is able to outline a new, innovative approach to service delivery for either a new community need or a historically chronic service challenge.

## **GRANT SIZE**

The Dryden Youth Opportunity Fund and the Cornell Student United Way provides the students with \$2,000 to distribute to local agencies. Students review the grant applications and provide funding recommendations based on the criteria above.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Applicants should thoroughly review the general partner eligibility and grant procedures document for funding eligibility requirements.

## **APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

All applications must be submitted online through Apricot. The FOCUS application opens in February and closes in late March.

A group of ten to twenty students review the applications and make their recommendations to the Community Investment Committee and the Board of Directors for approval. The grants are awarded to the receiving organizations in early June.

## **GRANT REPORTING**

If an organization receives a grant from FOCUS, it will be required to submit a final report the following spring. Additionally, recipients may be asked to assist with marketing and media efforts that highlight their work.

