



KEY MESSAGES 2025-2026

WELCOME TO OUR 2025-2026 KEY MESSAGES MANUAL

This document provides messaging you can use to speak with confidence and ease about United Way's mission, investment priorities and donor groups.

New content this year is on pages 1-21 and includes:

- Our forthcoming Multi-Year Grant Request for Proposal (RFP) process.
- Why unrestricted giving is so critical.
- About UW4Me, our Mobile Engagement Platform.
- Success stories by county and investment area.
- Our economic impact.
- Our Community Impact work.
- Our Aspirational Goals.
- 100,000 hour challenge: coming soon preview!

Our new campaign theme is **United is the Way**. You'll see this phrase in marketing materials, social media, videos and other graphics.

You can find videos about United is the Way, as well as PA 211 Southwest, volunteering and many other topics on our [YouTube Channel](#).

Last updated Sept. 18, 2025

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Our forthcoming Multi-Year Grant Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

Every three years, United Way runs a request for proposal process where we invite nonprofit human service agencies from across our five-county service area to apply for funding. Through this process we provide three-year grants, known as Multi-Year Grants, to the most effective agencies who make the biggest impact in our region.

Our staff subject matter experts have cultivated deep relationships with the nonprofit community and know which agencies truly understand and are able to address community needs. They work closely with these agencies to monitor trends, convene experts, address challenges and provide training sessions on topics important to them to help them learn together and perform at the highest possible level.

We also involve as many as 200 volunteers from all sectors of the community to review these proposals and help us make difficult funding decisions. We have 50,000 donors and we are accountable to all of you to make sure your contributions are being used as effectively as possible.

These funding decisions are difficult: we always receive more amazing proposals than we have dollars to fund and we need input from across all sectors of United Way's stakeholders to help us make the best funding decisions.

Applications for the next multi-year grant cycle will open in January 2026, for funding beginning in July 2026.

Letter of Intent opens: Jan. 5, 2026.

Letter of Intent due: Feb. 5, 2026.

Invitations to submit a Full Proposal are sent AND Full Proposal Opens: March 2, 2026.

Full Proposal DUE: April 2, 2026.

Full Proposal Review Period: April 10 to May 4, 2026.

Full Proposal Final Review Meeting: May 19, 2026.

Agency Notifications: June 2026.

Funding (year 1): July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027.

Information sessions for interested applicants will be held in October to November 2025
Technical Assistance Workshops will be held in early January 2026.

Talking about Unrestricted Giving

When you give directly to United Way, you help us make the greatest impact. Giving without restrictions on which agencies or causes benefit is called “unrestricted giving.”

Our Multi-Year Grants and Request For Proposal process are possible because donors like you give directly to United Way, providing us the flexibility to give to agencies that are the most innovative, effective and capable of meeting local needs.

Unrestricted giving removes barriers to impact. When you give without restrictions on which agencies will benefit, you allow United Way to direct resources where they are most urgently needed, helping 1.48 million people across the region each year. Your trust enables us to be both nimble and strategic in how we respond to complex, evolving challenges. United Way works with subject matter experts, volunteers, and community leaders to make strategic funding decisions that improve lives across our communities.

When we say that “Last year, United Way provided assistance to 1.48 million people,” those impact stats refer only to the people served by 211 and by agencies that receive Multi-Year Grants from United Way. Those Multi-Year Grants are funded by contributions directed to United Way, and not to specific agencies. We offer three years of funding because that provides nonprofits stability and knowledge that they can focus on their work and worry less about their funding.

We run many smaller grant programs throughout the year. That said, we know that lots can happen in those three years. We’ve also set up additional funding opportunities allowing us to pilot new programs such as our Digital Navigator Network, which provides low-cost internet access, devices and training to people who need them.

Unrestricted contributions also fund Rapid Response grant programs that help local agencies rise to evolving needs, such as reliable transportation for workforce trainees. We fund kindergarten readiness programs that help schools encourage on-time registration for kids entering school for the first time. Our Community Food Solutions program funds small, neighborhood-based agencies working to address food insecurity in their neighborhoods while also pairing small organizations with larger ones like the Food Bank and 412 Food Rescue so that they can learn from and help one another.

Unrestricted doesn’t mean that agencies can do anything they want with the money. In fact, it’s the opposite. Those dollars only go to agencies that we are in touch with on a regular basis. Our Community Impact staff meet with these agencies, do site visits and get regular progress reports. If an organization isn’t making progress or its mission changes, we do not renew their funding. This hands-on approach ensures your donation goes exactly where it can make the greatest impact.

Designated giving still matters—but consider a balance. Donor designations — where you choose a specific agency to receive your gift — will always be part of United Way’s DNA. We support you giving to where your heart leads. But we ask you to consider directing some of your pledge to United Way’s unrestricted fund. That choice allows us to go beyond simply writing checks. It lets us build capacity, spark innovation, and strengthen the whole network of nonprofits working toward lasting change.

What happened to the Impact Fund? Only the name has changed. We’re now saying “Give directly to United Way” or “give to United Way without restrictions.” We want people to understand that, when you give directly to United Way, you make it possible for us to meet the greatest needs of the community on an ongoing basis.

ABOUT UW4ME: Our Mobile Engagement Platform

UW4Me is United Way's mobile platform. It works like an app. Sign up and save the link to your home page. What you see on UW4Me is customized to your giving levels and volunteering history.

UW4Me is the fastest, easiest way to register for events and volunteer opportunities, to track volunteer hours, to donate and track your giving, and find out about special offers and opportunities for our donors and volunteers. There's also a news feed that syncs with our LinkedIn feed.

To sign up, go to this QR code. It's free and easy to use.



United Way's Economic Impact beyond grantmaking.

- Your contributions to United Way are helping our regional economy thrive.
- In November 2024, PwC published a new study, **The Economic Contribution of United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania**, which found that United Way is a significant driver of the local economy.
- The study found that United Way contributed \$65.4 million directly and indirectly to our regional economy in FY 2023 alone.
- Our impact goes far beyond grantmaking.
- Every dollar invested by United Way essentially doubled, generating at least two dollars of positive economic value.
- The work of our United Way employees plus our community investments has a multiplier effect: Every United Way job creates more than four additional local jobs, for a total of 581 jobs across the region.
- We're not able to capture the value of everything, including 211 calls. We are confident that our actual economic impact is even greater than two to one.
- In 2023, Free Tax Prep returned alone returned more than \$11 million in a single year to working families and saves an additional \$2 million in tax prep fees.

DRILL DOWN

- United Way has a long history of tracking outcomes and using data to make decisions. This study helps us better understand our impact over and above the grant investments that we make.
- Not only is United Way a nonprofit that supports human service. We are a networked organization that connects to and touches so many. Now we have a way to describe the value of this network in concrete and specific terms.
- This study represents a new way of thinking about human services philanthropy and changes the conversation about the case for donating.
- It shows that United Way is not only funding critical human services that help those who use services to thrive.
- We're also a significant driver of the regional economy, and that benefits the entire region beyond those who receive services.
- We hope that PwC's analysis will inspire the private sector to give more because their contributions have measurable economic impact.

If asked: How did we pay for this study? How much did it cost?

- We have an innovation fund, called United Way Forward, funded primarily through contributions from our board. This study was funded through the United Way Forward Fund, which is focused on innovation we might not otherwise pursue.

Our Community Impact work.

Our Community Impact team is made up of subject matter experts who dedicate their time to understanding community needs and trends, including those indicated by ALICE and 211 data. The Community Impact team works year-round to build relationships with nonprofit partner agencies, the foundation community and others in the field. As a result, our Community Impact staff understand which agencies are having the most impact meeting the needs of the communities they serve and unmet needs. This means that Community Impact:

1. Has the expertise and knowledge to lead and facilitate our Multi-Year Grants process to determine which agencies to fund.
2. Can develop and initiate rapid response and targeted emergency grant programs that can address unmet needs.
3. Leverage United Way's convening power to benefit the entire nonprofit sector. This includes:
 - Advocating to influence and guide policy makers.
 - Informing and collaborating with other funders.
 - Providing training and technical assistance to strengthen the nonprofit sector.

DRILL DOWN

More about our Multi-Year Grants (formerly Impact Fund).

In 2026, United Way will embark on our next Multi-Year Grants process. Through this process, we involve stakeholders across the community in reviewing proposals, leading to three-year grants to the most effective agencies having the greatest impact in our region. (SEE MORE on the RFP in the New Key Messages section.)

More on our other innovative grant opportunities:

We know that needs will come up in between grant cycles. And, our Community Impact team knows the importance of responding to emerging and unmet needs. That's where our other funding streams come in. These are smaller funding opportunities, often invitation only and centered around a specific problem. These include:

- Community Food Solutions, which provides grants of \$7,500 or less to small, community-based nonprofits that are addressing food insecurity in their own neighborhoods.
- Free Tax Prep, which returns more than \$13 million in tax refunds annually and saves an additional \$2 million in tax prep fees for working families making less than \$70,000 a year.

- Beyond The Classroom (which replaces Welcome Back Summer), which provides emergency funding for out-of-school time programs for items such as transportation.
- Digital Navigator Network, which connects thousands of people in our region to low-cost internet, devices and technical training so they can get and stay online now that internet access is a basic need.
- Guaranteed Income project, to pilot how small monthly payments improve quality of life for single women with children.
- Project DASH (which delivers items to people who need them).
- Ride United Transportation Assistance (which transports people who need rides).
- Kindergarten transition programs to support on-time registration/ enrollment.
- College Emergency Financial Assistance to help nontraditional and first-gen students enroll, stay and graduate from higher learning, including community college and trade schools.

More on how we leverage our convening power and advocacy to benefit the entire sector.

United Way is one of the most trusted philanthropic institutions and among the most trusted brands in the world. We use this reputational capital in a number of crucial ways that don't involve making grants per se. Specifically:

- We collaborate with other foundations and funders to address significant issues together, rather than in a siloed way.
- We engage in public policy and advocacy work to try and enact or change policies that bolster human services and improve people's lives.
- We also participate in or lead advisory groups that bring organizations together to solve problems. These include the Westmoreland Housing Advisory Board (housing insecurity), Alliance for Access and Assets (financial stability for people with disabilities), Western PA Early Literacy Team (to prepare kids for pre-K and kindergarten), and ElevateNP SWPA (capacity building for the nonprofit sector).
- Finally, we work closely with United Way's Volunteer Engagement team to create meaningful volunteer opportunities that align with the greatest needs we are hearing from our partner agencies.

Our Aspirational Goals.

United Way has set six aspirational goals for the organization to achieve by 2027 that make a tangible, positive impact in our region.

1. The first goal is to lift 6,600 households across our five-county region above the ALICE threshold.

- Currently 38% of households in our region fall under the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) threshold, which means they're living paycheck to paycheck without sufficient resources to meet their basic needs.
- United Way aims to help 6,600 families – or 2% of households within our service area – achieve greater financial stability and economic stability. To do this, we will:
 - Work to establish ALICE as the regional poverty data standard.
 - Target census tracts with the highest concentrations of ALICE households for coordinated intervention.
 - Align our multi-year grantmaking strategy to ensure families receive comprehensive support including workforce development, child care access, transportation and assistance meeting basic needs.

2. Position 211 as the foremost human services connector in southwestern Pennsylvania.

- United Way's 211 will be recognized as an indispensable resource that connects individuals and families with essential community services. To do this, we will:
 - Provide compassionate, expert assistance through our staff of highly trained resource navigators who offer vetted, up-to-date referrals and carefully monitor unmet needs.
 - Track and share data around contact trends, demographics and service gaps through monthly and annual reports that are shared widely.
 - Use technology while also preserving the human connection that distinguishes 211 from automated systems not answered by real people.

3. Build civic engagement that gives people hope that change is possible and provides ways to take action.

- United Way will create robust opportunities for community members, including the next generation of leaders to engage through giving, volunteering and advocacy. To do this we will:
 - Generate 100,000 hours of community service through diverse volunteer opportunities leading up to our 100th anniversary.
 - Engage 1,000 Next Generation donors and attract 250 new individual donors to support our aspirational goals.
 - Publish annual advocacy priorities aligned with our goals, with clear participation opportunities for donors, volunteers and stakeholders, and report on progress.

4. Help our partner agencies expand, innovate and be even more effective.

- United Way will strengthen the entire nonprofit ecosystem by providing our 100+ partner agencies with resources, expertise and support that goes far beyond traditional funding. To do this, we will:
 - Through our multi-year grant process, invest in organizations specifically to provide technical assistance to other agencies.
 - Advocate for the nonprofit sector through storytelling and policy in support of systemic improvements.
 - Provide learning networks, volunteer engagement, resource sharing and collaborative problem-solving.

5. Ensure young people are prepared for success at every stage.

- United Way will focus on critical transition points in young people's lives — kindergarten entry, third-grade reading proficiency, and postsecondary preparation — to ensure children and youth in our region have the tools and support needed to thrive academically and professionally. To do this, we will:
 - Strengthen kindergarten readiness by working with school districts and child care providers in districts with the lowest on-time registration rates.
 - Promote grade-level literacy through advocacy for Science of Reading legislation and partnerships with out-of-school-time providers.
 - Work with stakeholders to strengthen pathways from high school to college and career options.

6. Amplify community voices and drive policy change that helps people thrive.

- United Way will leverage our unique position as a connector across multiple sectors to give voice to community needs and advocate for systems change. To do this, we will:
 - Align our policy agenda with our investment priorities by focusing on legislation that impacts ALICE households and our core program areas (meeting, moving, building).
 - Serve as a data and insight resource for elected officials at all levels, sharing 211 and ALICE data along with compelling stories about community needs.
 - Involve board members, Impact Cabinet members and labor leaders in our awareness and policy efforts.

United Way's 100,000 Hour Challenge: A special preview

- United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania is launching a new initiative, the 100,000 Hours Challenge, to coincide with our upcoming 100th anniversary.
- In 2027, our goal is to organize 100,000 volunteer hours in one year. Normally, we have 15,000 volunteer hours in a year.
- How will we do this? We will enhance our corporate volunteer program, offering innovative tools and opportunities for employers to engage their employees. We're also adding new or expanding existing signature events like Meal Kit Packing and Big Book Drop so that more United Way donors and the public can jump in.
- And, we're creating volunteer opportunities that community members can organize and run on their own with the family and friends.
- Why are we doing this? The challenge will unite corporations, community organizations and families in a shared commitment to service – and positively impact the lives of many in our region.
 - Families, individuals and students will receive immediate, tangible support from volunteer programs that produce and distribute educational materials, STEM resources and nutritious meals.
 - Local nonprofits in which United Way invests will Gain increased capacity through strategic volunteer support.
 - Volunteers will gain a deeper understanding of community needs, build strong civic values, expand their networks and experience the proven mental health benefits of giving back.
 - Ultimately, we hope to encourage more people to become informed, empathetic and engaged community members.
 - We also believe that, when neighbors help neighbors, this strengthens social bonds, gets people involved and creates a more supportive community for everyone.
- Our goal is 100,000 volunteer hours, but the true measure of success will be less about the number and more about the outcomes.

SUCCESS STORIES BY COUNTY

ALLEGHENY SUCCESS STORIES

Meeting- Allegheny County

Veterans Place of Washington Boulevard

Veterans Place creates a path to stability and fulfilment.

Greg served in the U.S. Army from 1977 until his honorable discharge as a sergeant in 1983. He was a food service specialist and received numerous awards, including the Parachute Badge, Good Conduct Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Army Achievement Medal and the Overseas Service Ribbon. Greg's move out of the military into civilian life was smooth and stable thanks to family support and a place to live. Known for his strong work ethic, Greg easily found employment and particularly enjoyed work in the hospitality field. Greg started coming to Veterans Place in 2018 for the Low-Income Veterans and Families Program, which gave him access to free laundry services and daily meals provided by the Veterans Resource Center. Despite being employed and having access to these resources, Greg fell behind on rent and was facing the threat of eviction. Veterans Place was there to help. Greg received case management services and attended financial literacy classes offered at Veterans Place. Greg worked with his case managers and landlord to develop a budget plan to avoid eviction.

Veterans Place also connected him with additional longer-term support services through its community partners. Greg says Veterans Place has been a godsend for him. If it weren't for Veterans Place, Greg says, he wouldn't know where to turn when life got hard. Greg now no longer experiences financial difficulty paying his rent. He is excited to start his new job as a concession manager at PNC Park. The support he received from Veterans Place, from immediate crisis intervention to long-term financial planning, has been instrumental to his journey. Today, Greg looks forward to a brighter future and is confident in his ability to navigate life's challenges with the support of Veterans Place and its community partners.

Moving- Allegheny County

Catapult Greater Pittsburgh

From hope to home: Angela's journey to ownership with Catapult.

Catapult Greater Pittsburgh's mission is to close the wealth gap and achieve economic justice for historically disenfranchised communities. Through initiatives focused on homeownership, entrepreneurship and financial education, Catapult is creating pathways to economic empowerment. When the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, a nonprofit that offers affordable housing resources to Pennsylvania residents, approached Catapult with a shared

vision of closing the racial homeownership gap in Pittsburgh, Catapult partnered to develop a pilot program: Revitalizing Neighborhoods & Increasing Homeownership (RNIH). This partnership launched in February 2023 and offers grants of up to \$25,000 to qualified homebuyers, helping reduce loan principal and cover closing costs. Any remaining funds can be applied to paying down student loans and eligible borrowers may also access a 10-year forgiveness loan of up to 5% of the home's sale price.

Angela is a shining example of how this program is turning dreams into reality. She had always hoped to own a home but didn't think it was possible for her. "I ended up finding Catapult through one of my friends who told me I could buy a house with their help. I told her she was crazy and there was no way I could afford to buy a house," Angela shared. But once she connected with Catapult and joined the RNIH program, her dream began to take shape. With \$10,000 in closing costs covered by RNIH, Angela purchased her four-bedroom dream home and used her savings to refinish the floors.

Thanks to the support of United Way, programs like Catapult's RNIH are empowering individuals like Angela, increasing Black homeownership rates and building a more equitable Pittsburgh.

Building- Allegheny County

The Women and Girls Foundation

Empowered to Lead.

Leah B., a bright and thoughtful middle-schooler, joined the Girl Gov Middle School (GGMS) program through Propel Braddock Middle School and her mother, who saw her potential and wanted to support her confidence.

At first, Leah observed quietly, taking in the mentorship, engaging workshops and activities focused on leadership and self-expression. As she connected with the stories of civil rights leaders, she began to recognize her own strength. A powerful moment came during a field trip to the Heinz History Center, where she learned about the resilience of those who fought for justice. Inspired, she found the courage to stand up against bullying, using her voice in a way she hadn't before. Week by week, Leah's confidence grew. She became an active participant in discussions, eventually leading a group project on community advocacy. At home, her mother saw a remarkable difference and stood proud of the leader Leah was becoming.

Thanks to GGMS's partnership with United Way, girls like Leah have access to high-quality resources, scholarships and expert facilitators — ensuring they can grow and lead.

ARMSTRONG SUCCESS STORIES

Meeting – Armstrong County

Helping All Victims in Need HAVIN

More than shelter: finding home.

Selena, a 41-year-old immigrant and survivor of domestic violence, has shown incredible strength on her path to stability. During her time at the Helping All Victims In Need (HAVIN) shelter, she received comprehensive support tailored to her needs.

With the help of interpreter services, Selena was able to fully access critical resources. HAVIN connected her with a nonprofit immigration advocacy organization that is assisting her in securing temporary legal status while her residency is processed. The team also helped her find an apartment, provided guidance on navigating Pennsylvania's court system and equipped her with tools to advocate for herself.

From clothing and transportation to health care and more, HAVIN ensured Selena had the essentials to rebuild her life with dignity and confidence. Selena says, "I am grateful for HAVIN's services. I want to point out that HAVIN gave me a real home. They covered all my needs and they guided me on how to manage paperwork as an immigrant woman and native Spanish speaker with English-language barriers. I'm sure I'm not the only domestic violence survivor who is eternally grateful for finding HAVIN and for everything the shelter does to help its clients."

Moving – Armstrong County

Lifesteps

Julie found purpose in helping others

Julie, a young adult with an intellectual development disability, wants to have a job and make her own money. When Julie graduated from Butler Area High School in 2016, her team believed she had the capability to have competitive employment in the future but needed more training to reach her goal.

Julie was referred to Lifesteps Transition Program by her support coordinator in 2022. Transition Program staff work with young adults to develop pre-vocational, daily living and self-advocacy skills that help achieve competitive employment and to live as independently as possible.

In addition to classroom instruction, Julie participated in exploration, training and assessment at business partner locations such as Pittsburgh Marriott North, Dairy Queen, The DoubleTree,

Walgreens and The Pittsburgh Zoo. Julie showed good progress with employment training experiences in the community, and she did especially well at Dairy Queen cleaning tables and doing dishes.

By the spring of 2024, Julie's team agreed she was prepared to begin her job search. Because she enjoyed dining room work, Julie applied to Lutheran Senior Life as a dietary aid and was hired.

Lifesteps Employment Services assisted Julie with completing an online application, obtaining required employment documents and health screenings and attending orientation. Julie assists with setting up banquets, vacuuming and wrapping silverware. Recently, new responsibilities were added to her duties including portioning side dishes and salad dressings. Kitchen staff have communicated that they are very happy with Julie's performance. Employment Services staff continue to provide her support with learning job tasks and performing quality work. Julie enjoys going to work and often says, "I love my job because I love helping people."

With the help of United Way funding, Lifesteps Transition Program and Lifesteps Employment Services are able to help young adults with disabilities like Julie, accomplish their goals including employment and being contributing members of their community.

Building – Armstrong County

Armstrong Center for Community Learning

Curiosity in the wild: nature lessons at the Outdoor Discovery Center

Kenny, a trainee at the Adult Achievement Center through Progressive Workshop of Armstrong County (PWAC). PWAC is a nonprofit organization in Kittanning, Pennsylvania, empowering adults with disabilities through vocational rehabilitation services that support skill-building, independence and meaningful employment. Kenny has been an enthusiastic participant in nature lessons at the Outdoor Discovery Center over the past year. He brings curiosity and joy to every session, especially when learning about animals and the natural world. One highlight for Kenny was an engaging lesson on bullfrogs, where participants explored the frogs' life cycle and created frog egg slime. He's already looking ahead and hopes to learn about bald eagles in the future.

In a written report, Progressive Workshop praised Outdoor Discovery Center's staff and volunteers for their patience and skill in answering questions and assisting with hands-on activities. "Our clients and employees regularly attend the Outdoor Discovery Center's nature lessons about topics related to animals, plants, weather and more. We are glad to have this resource at the Discovery Center where our individuals can be exposed to topics that they might not typically learn about in our programs or elsewhere; this type of instruction is valuable to them, and each lesson is always a fun and enjoyable experience."

BUTLER SUCCESS STORIES

Meeting – Butler County

Jean B. Purvis Community Health Center

A healthier smile, a brighter tomorrow.

Moe and his wife, Shia, moved from Egypt to Butler County to be closer to their son. Without access to employer-sponsored dental insurance, they were both struggling with dental issues from the lack of preventive and restorative care.

At the Community Health Center, they received the care they needed. Shia had several fillings done and Moe received multiple treatments, including the removal of a broken, painful tooth. Thanks to the dental team's support, both are now free from tooth decay and are enjoying healthy dental conditions.

Moving – Butler County

Center for Community Resources, Inc.

Volunteer Tax Assistance puts money back in the community.

For older adults with fixed incomes, an income tax refund can make a dramatic difference. The Center for Community Resources runs a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) location that served an older adult who had not completed her taxes for a very long time. VITA sites are funded by the United Way. Certified volunteers were able to file her new taxes and taxes for three years prior, as allowed by the IRS. When she came back to file this year, she was so excited to share that with the help of the Center's VITA program and volunteers, she was able to save her home from foreclosure. Refunds from the previous years' tax returns made it possible for her to pay her outstanding property taxes. She remains in her home and is now filing her taxes yearly. In addition, Center volunteers referred her to the property tax/rent rebate program that will help her each year with her property taxes.

With United Way's funding, the Center for Community Resources puts people on the path to stability and prosperity.

Building – Butler County

Camp Apple with Teen Camp Apple

From Camp Apple to Kennywood: Decklyn's Unforgettable Summer Experience.

Decklyn, a camper at Community Care Connections, has been attending Camp Apple since he was five years old. Decklyn, now 12, is autistic and being raised by his grandmother, who has

physical limitations and limited financial resources. Because of these constraints, Decklyn hasn't had many of the same experiences as other kids his age. He attends school and participates in Community Care Connections' Camp Apple for school-aged children, but he hasn't taken part in organized sports, extracurricular activities or visited popular attractions in Pittsburgh.

This summer, an unexpected opportunity arose for Decklyn to attend a field trip to Kennywood, a popular amusement park. When a Teen Camp Apple participant couldn't make it, Decklyn was offered the spot. However, he initially declined because he thought he couldn't afford it. Once assured that the costs were covered, Decklyn's was beaming. He shared with the camp director that he had never been to Kennywood before and couldn't wait to go.

Decklyn's grandmother was equally thrilled because her physical limitations made it challenging to take him to places like Kennywood. Without Community Care Connections' support, she wouldn't have been able to afford Kennywood tickets or manage the travel logistics. Decklyn had a blast, riding roller coasters and making memories with his friends. On the way home, he couldn't stop talking about his amazing day.

Decklyn's excitement from the Kennywood trip has had a lasting effect, and he still talks about it with enthusiasm. Looking ahead, he's eager to join the Teen Camp Apple summer camping trip in August, an overnight sleep-away adventure that will be another new experience for him. Community Care Connections is thrilled to provide Decklyn with opportunities like these, helping him broaden his horizons and create cherished memories. These experiences wouldn't be possible without the program's commitment to offering enriching activities for all campers regardless of their circumstances and generous funding from United Way.

FAYETTE SUCCESS STORIES

Meeting— Fayette County

Domestic Violence Services of Southwestern PA

A Story of Courage and Renewal.

Courtney met Jack in 2021, shortly after receiving a chronic health diagnosis that left her unable to work. He promised support and care, but after their wedding, the relationship quickly turned abusive. Courtney was isolated, denied her medication and emotionally manipulated. A turning point came when she confided in a member of her church who worked with Domestic Violence Services of Southwestern Pennsylvania (DVSSP), which connected her to a safe house in Fayette Safe House. With this support, Courtney bravely left the abusive relationship. At DVSSP, Courtney embraced every opportunity to heal. Through therapy and advocacy, she learned about the cycle of abuse and how to manage her anxiety and began to rebuild her life. In a safe, supportive environment, she regained control of her health and was soon well enough to work again.

After four months at the safe house, Courtney secured her own housing and was reunited with her beloved dog. Though stepping out on her own was scary, the confidence and strength she gained at DVSSP empowered her to move forward with courage.

Moving— Fayette County

Life'sWork of Western PA

Helping individuals in recovery build a brighter future.

Ben, a Westmoreland County resident, connected with Life'sWork of Western PA after successfully completing a six-month transitional program, which marked a new chapter following 10 years of incarceration. Ready to rebuild, Ben took the initiative to seek out support and resources to move forward with purpose.

Ben connected with Life'sWork through a referral network that assists individuals moving from correctional facilities to community integration programs. At Life'sWork, Ben received comprehensive employment coordination and holistic support aimed at fostering his personal and professional growth. Life'sWork facilitated his placement in a masonry apprenticeship, which provided him with skills training and ongoing coaching to excel in his new career path. As a result, Ben not only met his employment goals by securing a full-time position but also began repairing his relationships with his young children and set up regular visits after he graduated from his halfway house. United Way played a pivotal role in Ben's journey by providing additional resources and support services that complemented Life'sWork's program, ensuring he had the necessary tools and opportunities to successfully reintegrate into society and build a brighter future.

Building— Fayette County

Domestic Violence Services of Southwestern Pennsylvania

It takes a village: How collaboration builds emotional skills in children.

When Domestic Violence Services of Southwestern Pennsylvania’s Chief Operating Officer Alexandra Brooks walked into the classroom, 17 children — ages five and six — sat bright-eyed and excited to welcome her. This wasn’t the first kindergarten classroom Alexandra had stepped into as part of the Connected and Respected program, and she was eager to dive into the lesson about identifying and communicating feelings.

One part of the lesson involves asking the children to list as many feelings as they can. Answers are then recorded on a board. As expected, Alexandra heard the usual responses: happy, sad, mad, bored, angry and scared. But what she didn’t anticipate were words like elated, anxious, delighted and grateful. Having worked with children this age for many years, Alexandra knows that sometimes kids repeat words they’ve heard without fully understanding them. So, she asked, “What does it mean when we feel _____?” The children’s responses were thoughtful and informed — some of the most advanced answers she had ever heard from kindergartners.

While it would have been nice to credit the Connected and Respected program for their advanced emotional vocabulary, Alexandra knew this was her first time meeting these children. That meant they learned these words somewhere else.

Later, when she stopped by the guidance office to share how the day went, Alexandra mentioned the wide range of emotions the kindergarteners could name and describe. The guidance counselor was visibly excited. As it turned out, he had also been working closely with the students on identifying and communicating their feelings. He was thrilled that the progress the students had made together was clearly showing.

Alexandra reflects on her time with the children and shares, “Children need to hear messages from multiple people in their lives, from their family to their teachers to their friends. While this story may seem like a story of duplicative work, it is far from that. It is a story of collaboration, where everyone’s goal is to better the social emotional skills for our youth so that they can have a healthier tomorrow. It is because of United Way’s funding that Domestic Violence Services can offer Connected and Respected in Fayette County and have the opportunity to work hand in hand with schools to help the children in Fayette County have a happier, healthier future!”

WESTMORELAND SUCCESS STORIES

Meeting— Westmoreland County

SPHS Connect Inc.

From Shelter to Self Sufficiency.

Paul and Courtney came to Welcome Home after being evicted from their previous residence, seeking stability for themselves and their three young children. With no local support system, they turned to 211, which connected them to Welcome Home's emergency shelter.

During their stay, the family accessed vital resources including SNAP benefits, medical assistance and school enrollment for the children. Both Paul and Courtney participated in Welcome Home's enhanced life skills classes, gaining practical tools in budgeting, money management, meal planning and nutrition.

Paul found a new job with higher pay than his previous position, stabilizing their income and making it possible for the family to move into their own apartment. The family is doing well, and Courtney hopes to begin an educational training course once their youngest starts school later this summer.

Thanks to the partnership between Welcome Home and United Way, Paul and Courtney had the safe, supportive space they needed to rebuild. With guidance from skilled case managers and access to community resources, they're now on a path toward a more secure future.

Moving— Westmoreland County

YWCA Westmoreland County

"It's the next chapter in my life:" YWCA Westmoreland County builds skills and confidence.

When asked how the YWCA of Westmoreland County changed her life, one client wrote, "I wanted to write a letter of gratitude to you and your staff for your daily commitment to your organization's mission: empowering women and girls through your programs, educational classes and events.

Taking advantage of what you have to offer certainly has changed my life for the better. "I have been a broadcast journalist for decades but was only familiar with specific programs used in my field. Why did I need to learn Microsoft Word? Now that I am in my late- 50s, I told myself I was too old to be in broadcasting and worked low-wage jobs, including as a nurse aide, med-tech and cook. I was pleased to gain new skills, but exhausted from working seven days a week, 13 hours a day to make ends meet and pay my bills on time. I knew it was an unsustainable situation. That's why I contacted the YWCA. After a couple of conversations, they gifted me a scholarship for one-on-one computer classes. So generous! I took these tutorial classes every

other week for four months. Over time, I became fairly competent with Word, which allowed me to secure freelance work as a writer and producer in TV. It CANNOT be overstated how professional, kind and generous the staff at the YWCA were to me."

"Three weeks ago, I was offered a full-time producer job with benefits at a TV station in Norfolk, Virginia. I would not have been able to get this if I hadn't taken the YWCA computer classes which enabled me to get freelance work. Those classes built my confidence and faith. I am grateful for the YWCA's ongoing commitment to lifting other women up. I leave for Virginia on Wednesday. It's the next chapter in my life."

Building– Westmoreland County

Community Care Connections, Inc.

At Delmont Public Library music makes a difference.

During a Wild Symphony program at Delmont Public Library, one three-year-old child, a bright and expressive individual on the autism spectrum who communicates in nonverbal ways, started the program series sitting quietly away from the group. By the end of the fourth session, the child was actively singing songs along with the group and head bopping to the sounds of the Wild Symphony playlist. The child's guardian was astounded by the child's progress and stated that the child was brought to the program for extra social interaction because the family has been afraid of enrolling the child in a preschool program. The child also enjoyed use of the scarves while playing the music and singing the songs. Partnership with United Way allows for program expenses including the purchase of many supplies, equipment and personnel costs that make this program not only possible but a success.

211 SUCCESS STORIES (no county identifiers available)

- Consider Courtney's story. With help from United Way partner agency Domestic Violence Services of Southwestern Pennsylvania, Courtney was able to escape an abusive relationship and get the support and courage needed to secure safe housing and rebuild her life.
- Consider Kev, a proud United States Marine Corps veteran, who was having difficulty finding a job after serving in Baghdad. With support from United Way partner agency Auberle, Kev earned hazardous material certifications that led to a full-time job. He's now on the way to owning a home and a vehicle.
- Consider Ms. Frances, an 86-year-old woman whose landlord refused to make repairs. United Way partner agency Neighborhood Legal Services helped Ms. Frances find a senior apartment where she now has air conditioning, a washer and dryer and safe drinking water.

ENGAGING YOUR AUDIENCE

LET'S GET THE CONVERSATION STARTED!

A great way to get your audience engaged is to ask people how our work connects directly to and impacts their own lives and the lives of people they know. Suggested questions:

- Does anyone here know anyone who wasn't sure they could afford to buy groceries, also known as "food insecurity"?
 - Have you ever known anyone who was worried about housing and having enough for rent and utilities? Or couldn't afford health care or child care?
 - How about finding a good job: do you know anyone who has a loved one who has had difficulty finding a job that paid enough to cover all the bills?
 - So many people across our region have experience with these issues.
 - These are all examples of human services, which is what we invest in at United Way.
1. Do you ever wish there was something you could do, some way you could engage, to lend a hand to neighbors who can't seem to get ahead no matter how hard they work?
 - United Way has a robust volunteer engagement program that connects nearly 5,300 people to pack meal kits, books for kids, and school supplies every year.
 2. Do you wish you knew which agencies were doing the best work to help people in need in our community, so that you were confident that your donations would make a difference?
 - When you give directly to United Way, we make sure your contributions go to agencies who are skilled in meeting community needs.
 - United Way has staff experts who work with nonprofits and community leaders and know which agencies are doing truly excellent work and making a difference.

3. Last question: Have you ever wondered how you could find other people who care about this community as much as you do, so that you could meet them, learn about what they do and connect with people who share your values?
 - United Way organizes leadership donor events year-round that bring people together from the for-profit, nonprofit and public service sectors to socialize, network and give back.

No other organization does all of these things. I'm excited today to talk with you about how, by giving to United Way, you can partner with us in making this community better for everyone.

KEY MESSAGES

Why United Way?

United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania has three superpowers, called the Three Cs, that set us apart. We are a:

- **Connector**, bringing people together to volunteer, engage, donate and contribute their knowledge and life experience.
- **Convenor**, gathering community experts and affected populations to think through issues, plan, innovate and act together.
- **Catalyst**, encouraging community-wide investment in effective solutions with the greatest potential to help people thrive.

What does United Way actually do?

We invest. We solve problems. We inspire people to give. We are a hub of volunteering and engagement. We are experts in community needs. And we are a lifeline for people who need assistance.

Drill down:

- First, United Way invests in our community. Each year, United Way invests approximately \$30 million in the community. Our investments fall into three main areas:
 - Meeting basic needs so families and individuals can thrive.
 - Moving people to financial stability and independence.
 - Helping young people build the skills to succeed in school and in life.
- **Next, United Way uses our three superpowers — Connecting, Convening and Catalyzing — to solve problems** faced every day by individuals and families across our region. How do we do this?
 - We are the glue, connecting all sectors of the community who share our goal of making southwestern Pennsylvania a thriving place. This includes businesses, individuals, nonprofits and government. We can do more together than any of us could ever do on our own.

- We solve problems by convening experts, including people affected by challenges, to figure out what's needed beyond money so the communities we all love and belong to can thrive.
- We inspire others to give. We have nearly 100 years of expertise in community needs, so companies and individuals give to United Way because they know that their investments go farther when they do.
- We are a hub of volunteering and engagement. Each year, we provide meaningful volunteering opportunities for nearly 5,300 people. This helps our partner agencies complete critical tasks, helping our donors and volunteers see community needs and showing them that they can make a big difference by giving back.
- We are a lifeline for people who need assistance. Through our 211 contact center, we connect people in need – more than 610,000 last year – to vital human services in times of crisis.
- We organize collaborations and special projects that span nonprofits, businesses and government, often supported by our volunteers. By mobilizing multiple sectors, we provide unparalleled opportunity for everyone to understand what's holding our community back and how we can create change together.

When you give to United Way, your donations stay local and benefit your community.

Why do we say that? *Note: County-specific impact data is [available on our website](#).*

- United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania invests in five counties: Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette and Westmoreland. Our most recent round of investments benefited more than 100 agencies across this region. United Way has three offices serving our region. One is in the Strip District/downtown, one is in Greensburg and one is in Butler.
- United Way partners with hundreds of local nonprofits to meet the needs of families and individuals in our community, from housing and securing meaningful employment to education and services for older adults. When you donate to United Way, you are making it possible for us to address many critical needs in our community.
- Issues such as access to safe and affordable housing and high-quality education are never confined to geographic or political borders, but we've found the most effective way to help local communities is through guidance by people who know the local challenges and opportunities.
- We have expert staff members who live and work in the five counties we serve. They understand the issues facing each community and work with donors, volunteers and partner agencies to collaborate and act together.
- Our local operating boards are comprised of residents who understand the needs of the community and provide expertise and insight, particularly in Armstrong, Butler, Fayette and Westmoreland counties.
- Our staff also serve on and chair committees that work with health and human service groups to coordinate services and fill in the gaps. This network extends far beyond our partner agencies.

United Way uses data to make decisions: 211.

About our 211 Helpline

Because United Way is a global network, we have access to data resources available only through our network. These data resources provide in-depth insight into existing and emerging needs. Specifically:

- **United Way's 211 helpline.** Our resource navigators are available by phone, text and chat 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year.
- How many people reach out? The helpline we run in Pennsylvania receives about 400 contacts daily.
- What happens in these interactions? Our highly trained resource navigators assess the needs of each person and offer connections to nearly 7,000 agencies providing 21,000 services across Pennsylvania. Resource Navigators often follow up to check on progress and provide additional support.
- Contacts to 211 are carefully logged. This provides a wealth of data about the greatest needs in each community, down to the ZIP code.
- Data is shared in real-time in a public database at the [PA 211 statewide dashboard](#). This information helps United Way anticipate and respond to the changing needs of our community and is available to everyone, including nonprofit staff, government officials and the public, so they can also plan to address emerging needs.
- The data is searchable. 211 contact data can be searched and sorted by zip code, county, legislative district and need. This means anyone can see, in real time, what the greatest needs are in a community and who is need.
- How do we use 211 data? The data helps us devise programs that are tailored to emerging needs and to predict needs before they become a crisis.
- 211 also allows rapid and instant connection to services such as disaster response, Free Tax Prep and access to low-cost internet and computer training.

United Way uses data to make decisions: ALICE.

United Way's ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) data tracks the true costs of meeting basic needs and shows how people are faring financially.

- ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) data is the metric United Way uses to track the ability of individuals and families to pay for basic needs.
- ALICE data gives a much more realistic picture of the number of people struggling than federal poverty guidelines, which calculate only how much is needed to afford a nutritious diet.
- ALICE considers the cost of housing, transportation, child care, health care and basic technology.
- ALICE workers are service employees, receptionists, caregivers and seasonal workers.
- What ALICE data makes clear is that far too many of our neighbors do not earn enough to afford the necessities of life. Many also encounter the “benefits cliff” because they earn too much to receive government assistance.
- United Way, in collaboration with our partner agencies, is committed to raising awareness of ALICE and the true cost of meeting basic needs so that we can mobilize the community.
- A common belief among many Americans is that if you show up and work hard, you can support your family. The evidence — supported by United Way's 211 data — shows that, for 38% of households in southwestern Pennsylvania, that is not the case.
- The federal poverty level, which measures only the cost of food, is about \$2,700 per month. The ALICE survival budget in Allegheny County for a family of four with two kids in child care is \$7,850 per month.

VOLUNTEERING

United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania is a hub of community engagement and action.

Why do we say that?

- Since 1927, companies and individuals in our area have relied on United Way to guide their philanthropic giving and create the greatest good.
- By giving to United Way, companies, their employees and the community at large elevate the neighborhoods where we all live and work.
- Over our years of service and philanthropy, United Way has gained the trust of the community and is known for expertise in identifying and investing in innovative solutions to address community needs.
- This means we have a network of hundreds of companies, and thousands of community partners and individual donors whom we can call upon to act rapidly and purposefully.
- We lead by listening, attuned to the needs of the community and informed by data. The investment we make through our grants strengthens our agency partners and change lives.
- Last year, we invested \$960,000 in creating volunteer engagement opportunities that mobilized nearly 5,300 people.

Through United Way, our vast community of donors, volunteers, companies and philanthropies come together to maximize our collective impact.

Why do we say that?

- United Way is where those most committed to our region work together to create lasting change.
- In 2024-2025, our network of donors and agency partners provided assistance to nearly 1.48 million individuals, families and children.
- Our donors participate in grant application reviews, widening the circle of people who understand the needs of our region.
- We convene Community Change Collaboratives and Community Partnerships, connecting organizations and individuals and providing a forum to plan and act.

- These efforts are supported by a dedicated network of volunteers ready to pitch in with their time and talents.
- Our 211 and ALICE data allows us to monitor how our community is faring so that we can create initiatives to address emerging needs and head off problems before they become crises.

CORPORATE CULTURE

United Way helps companies give back to the community and create purpose and meaning for their employees.

Why do we say that?

- Now more than ever, employees want their company to demonstrate social responsibility through giving and providing opportunities to engage and volunteer. United Way facilitates both.
- Companies know that United Way has a nearly 100-year track record in this community of forming partnerships that mobilize quickly and compassionately in times of urgent need.
- United Way provides turn-key engagement programs. We make it easy for organizations to engage employees in meaningful volunteering and hands-on activities in the neighborhoods where companies and their employees live and work.
- Many of our volunteer engagement efforts are designed for the employees who work for our corporate partners, creating meaningful ways for teams to come together.
- By donating and volunteering with United Way, you demonstrate to your employees, vendors and customers that your company's charitable intent stays right here in your own backyard, impacting lives and helping communities and businesses thrive.

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Why does United Way invest in meeting basic needs, moving to financial stability and building for success in school and life?

Working with community leaders, partner agencies and local advisory boards, we honed our focus to three priority areas that are the foundation for well-being and a thriving community.

- **Meeting basic needs:** Individuals and families have greater opportunity to thrive when they have access to nutritious food, a safe place to live and supportive community resources.
 - **Why is this so critical?** Although the economy has stabilized for many households, data shows the need for essentials such as food and shelter are greater than ever in our region. Contacts to our PA 211 Southwest helpline have increased significantly over the last five years. In 2024, PA 211 Southwest received 610,000 requests from people in need, up from 191,000 requests in 2019.
- **Moving to financial stability.** People who earn a living wage and have the tools they need to build wealth are able to fulfill their potential and get on a path to financial freedom.
 - **Why is this so critical?** Meaningful work helps all people — regardless of age, ability, gender or previous justice system involvement — to have pride and self-confidence. United Way invests in partners committed to building individual skills and developing career opportunities that put employees in a position to succeed on the job and in life.
- **Building for success in school and life.** All young people deserve to have a positive start toward adulthood, to learn and succeed and to reach their full potential.
 - **Why is this so critical?** Education is the key to stability, success and confidence. In 2024-25 alone, United Way invested \$1.75 million in 50 agencies working to level the playing field for students from pre-K to high school and beyond.
 - **Another example?** United Way collaborates in Fayette County with Early Intervention, Head Start, schools and pre-K programs to involve families in early childhood education and get kids registered and ready to enter kindergarten. When families have the resources they need, their children develop a love of learning and are more likely to enjoy and succeed in school.

WHAT IS 211?

ABOUT 211: WHAT IS 211 AND WHY DOES IT MATTER FOR OUR REGION?

An unexpected job loss, illness or car repair is sometimes all it takes to push a family or individual into financial crisis.

- If you or someone you love need assistance and don't know where to turn, reach out to United Way's PA 211 helpline, which provides a 24/7/365 safety net that can be found nowhere else.
- Our highly trained resource navigators are on call every day of the year and receive about 300 requests daily by phone, text or online. We connect people with answers and quality resources in their community.
- Each resource navigator has access to a list of resources specific to the caller's home area to ensure services are tailored for their community.
- For example, if rental assistance is the reason for the call, we'll ask the caller if they also need help with utilities, food, even low-cost internet, and work to find real solutions that help prevent even larger issues.
- **Contacts to PA 211 Southwest increased significantly over the past five years. Consistently, the greatest needs are food, housing and utility assistance.**
- Our 211 Contact Center serves people far beyond United Way's five- county service area. People in the following counties are served by the contact center that we manage:

Allegheny	Crawford	McKean
Armstrong	Delaware	Mercer
Beaver	Elk	Montgomery
Bucks	Erie	Philadelphia
Butler	Fayette	Potter
Cambria	Forest	Somerset
Cameron	Greene	Venango
Chester	Indiana	Warren
Clarion	Jefferson	Washington
Clearfield	Lawrence	Westmoreland

- United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania runs 211 because we have the expertise, efficiency and experience to do it well. It costs about \$4 million per year to run 211 but the impact is invaluable.

- Now in its second decade of service, PA 211 Southwest also provides United Way with a wealth of actionable data that helps forecast growing areas of need and provides insight into how to proactively invest in programs that prevent crises before they occur.
- In the event of a natural disaster or emergency, 211 can send outgoing messages to alert people in the disaster area and inform them how to access relief programs in their area.

WHY DONATE TO UNITED WAY

PARTNER AGENCY BENEFITS: why should people donate to United Way?

- By far the most effective and efficient way to make your contribution work harder is by giving directly to United Way.
- **Partner agency benefits:** Every dollar donated to United Way is worth more because United Way provides so much more than money to our partner agencies. Partner agencies not only receive funding. They also:
 - Benefit from the power of our volunteer network of who want to assist and give back.
 - Have access to professional development opportunities organized or funded by United Way.
 - These activities build capacity, nonprofit networks and enhance the ability of agencies to collaborate with one another.
 - May become part of our speaker's bureau, which provides more than talks each year to companies and individuals about the needs facing the community.
 - Benefit from our growing advocacy efforts in Harrisburg and Washington, D.C., to increase investment in human services and for policy change around issues such as child care, digital access for all, and family medical leave in Pennsylvania.
 - Have their work featured and amplified on our wide-reaching social media networks and digital outreach.
 - Turn to our Community Impact staff for assistance with unexpected issues and to connect with other agencies who have experienced similar challenges.

BENEFITS TO DONORS: Why should people donate directly to United Way?

Every dollar donated directly to United Way is worth more because United Way provides so much more than money to our individual and corporate donors. Benefits to our donors include:

- **Access to engagement opportunities not available anywhere else.** These include major events such as Big Book Drop and Build A Bike, as well as smaller gatherings, including opportunities to listen live as 211 resource navigators take calls, and packing food or school supplies for neighbors in need.
- **Checks and balances.** We make sure every donation goes to an established and vetted 501c3 organization. Our robust and engaged board of directors provide fiscal oversight and community expertise. Charity Navigator has awarded us a four-star rating every year since 2009.
- **Deep connections to the nonprofit community.** Our Community Impact staff and Impact Cabinet of community leaders engage in site visits and meet regularly with partner agencies in the field. They know which nonprofits are most innovative and effective and we invest accordingly.
- **Maximizing your investment.** Our deep community knowledge and extensive networks supercharge your investment and provide the greatest impact possible.
- **Ability to join our donor societies,** which provide more in-depth networking, learning and engagement opportunities.
- **Networking and connection with others who care about our community.** United Way's donor network is and includes some of the region's most respected corporate, nonprofit and government leaders.
- **Opportunities to socialize for a greater purpose.** United Way volunteer and social events unite our community and show your contributions in action.
- **Financial oversight and confidence.** Our 60-member board of directors, who are business and community leaders, provide strong governance and financial oversight.

- **Benefits for Leadership donors**, including:
 - Recognition on our website as our most dedicated supporters.
 - Leadership donors have a personal United Way representative who can answer their questions throughout the year.
 - First access to essential information about community needs and impact through our newsletters and publications.

DETERMINING WHICH AGENCIES RECEIVE FUNDING

HOW DOES UNITED WAY MAKE FUNDING DECISIONS?

United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania has a competitive proposal and grant-making process that makes it possible for us to invest in a larger and more diverse group of nonprofits throughout our five-county geographic region. Our strategic investments encourage innovation by the agencies that engage in direct service.

- **Who reviews applications?** Nearly 120 donor volunteers and subject matter experts collaborated with our Community Impact staff to evaluate grant requests from 370 nonprofit agencies and honed that group to 150 highly competitive proposals.
- **How much do you award?** Overall, we leverage about \$30 million to support the community each year.
- **Why give Multi-Year Grants?** United Way is proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with each of our partner agencies, committing to three years of continued investment, providing our agencies breathing room to focus on serving their constituents and improving quality of life. Our investments focus on three key areas: meeting basic needs, moving to financial stability and building for success in school and life.
- **We also provide a series of smaller funding opportunities throughout the year.** These include funding for responding to specific crises, innovations, or specific needs such as food insecurity or access to technology. Details are available on our website.

THE FUND FOR TRANSFORMATION AND RESILIENCE

OUR 100TH ANNIVERSARY FUND

Core messages:

It's not enough to do things as they have always been done, particularly now when community needs are increasing. Instead, we must be prepared for whatever opportunities and challenges may arise. Truly serving this community requires greater investment in United Way's core mission, while also building capacity to rise to challenges we cannot yet imagine.

The Fund for Transformation and Resilience creates the opportunity for United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania to do both.

How do we know needs are increasing?

- Contacts to our PA Southwest 211 helpline have increased significantly to 610,000 in 2024, up from 190,000 in 2019 before the pandemic.
- About 38% of working people in our region do not earn enough to pay for their basic needs. (Source: ALICE data, United Way.)
- Requests by nonprofits for funding exceeded our grantmaking capacity by nearly \$4 million in 2023. We received 370 proposals but were able to fund about 100.

What the fund will do:

The Fund will make it possible for us to innovate and invest more deeply in addressing community needs.

- Though our fundraising efforts are very well-supported, we are unable to address many critical community needs. In 2023, we received 370 funding proposals. When we honed down to the 136 most competitive proposals, those requests still exceeded our grantmaking budget by nearly \$4 million. Although we are proud of our funding record, we recognize that the dollars we were able to award fell short of real community needs by 34%.
- This permanent endowed fund will dramatically increase our ability to meet community needs by generating at least \$2 million in additional dollars each year.
- This is not a rainy-day fund. Rather, it is an investment in the future of the safety net that serves the people of our region.

- It's an opportunity to reaffirm your commitment to our core mission and forge new ways forward.
- The Fund for Transformation and Resilience is an opportunity for donors who believe in our mission to have an even greater impact in creating a community where everyone can thrive.

Your personal commitment to United Way and the Fund:

- I'm [NAME] and I am the [TITLE] of the Transformation and Resilience Fund. I've been a donor to United Way for decades because I believe in our core work of meeting basic needs, moving to financial stability and building for success in school and life.
- **I'm giving to The Fund for Transformation and Resilience because I believe that United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania has proven to be the most competent, trusted and connected convenor of human services agencies in this region.**
- Its financial stability, network of partners, highly competent leadership and committed board have uniquely positioned United Way to lead and innovate.
- It is also the only institution in the region dedicated entirely to funding human services needs.
- My contributions to the Fund For Transformation and Resilience are an investment in the region's safety net. By giving, I am increasing the capacity of nonprofit agencies that respond when our neighbors are in crisis.

Why you should give now:

- When you contribute to the Fund, you make it possible for United Way to focus on transformative solutions and make a more resilient community possible; one that is ready to plan for and overcome whatever crisis may lay ahead.
- Imagine what an additional \$2 million each year could do to support our region. Because this is an endowed fund that will grow as the stock market grows, the dollars awarded back out to the community will increase.
- Your leadership gift to The Fund for Transformation and Resilience is commitment to United Way's vision of a brighter future for everyone in southwestern Pennsylvania.
- Please continue investing in our core impact investment areas while also making an additional gift to the Fund to establish a permanent legacy of transformation and resilience.

COMMUNITY CHANGE COLLABORATIVES AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

ABOUT COMMUNITY CHANGE COLLABORATIVES & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

United Way has identified several multifaceted community needs that no one organization can tackle alone. We are addressing these needs through Community Change Collaboratives and Community Partnerships. These are our signature community impact initiatives.

Community Change Collaboratives: Community Change Collaboratives bring together people from a variety of sectors – public, private, nonprofit, foundation and education – to generate innovative and real-world solutions to challenges that affect a wide cross-section of our communities. United Way leads these initiatives with the goal of providing the greatest impact with measurable results. We cannot do this alone: our partners represent a multitude of community stakeholders, and we actively seek funding partners to invest along with us to make these collaborations possible.

In fiscal year 2024-2025, United Way invested nearly \$465,500 in:

- **Community Food Solutions:** United Way supports programs that address food security in our area. Community Food Solutions provides mini grants three times a year to local, grassroots organizations and groups that are addressing food insecurity and have expertise in the unique needs of their neighborhoods. A Community Food Solutions Steering Committee, made up of leading organizations in the field, provides grantees with resource connections and technical assistance.
- **Digital Access for All:** Internet access is now a basic need. By supporting and promoting Digital Access for All, United Way addresses access to affordable internet service, digital devices and digital skills training through our Digital Navigator Network. We partner with community organizations and connect people through our 211 helpline to the digital resources they need. We are working with local government, the private sector and community organizations to explore and close gaps in broadband infrastructure in our region, and help people overcome barriers to getting online.
- **Real Help Real Time/ Emergency Financial Assistance for Early Childhood Education:** The Early Childhood Education Emergency Financial Assistance Fund supports families enrolled in Head Start and Pre-K Counts programs throughout the region. This fund helps cover urgent needs such as rent, utilities, and transportation, including car repairs. Partnering program staff use United Way support dedicated to removing barriers to education to assist families with their

immediate needs. Payments are provided directly to landlords, utility companies, or auto mechanics to quickly resolve challenges. Current partners include Allegheny Intermediate Unit (Allegheny), Early Learning Connections (Armstrong & Butler), Seton Hill Child Services (Westmoreland), Westmoreland Community Action (Westmoreland), and Private Industry Council (Fayette).

- **College Emergency Financial Assistance Coalition:** Research funded by United Way and The Heinz Endowments found that first generation college students could benefit from support systems that help overcome barriers to completing their degrees. First-generation college students are more likely to be low-income and borrow more than their peers to pay for college. The College Emergency Financial Assistance fund provides these students with financial assistance for non-tuition and non-room and board-based costs, such as rent, utilities, child care and transportation including car repairs. United Way works closely with local colleges and universities to provide their students with access to these funds and increase the likelihood of graduation and the well-being that comes with rewarding and well-paying work. Our partners currently are Butler County Community College, Carlow University, Citizens School of Nursing/AHN, Duquesne University, Penn State University Fayette, The Eberly Campus Slippery Rock University and Westmoreland County Community College.
- **Beyond the Classroom:** Out of School Time (OST) programming is vital for the well-being and development of children in our region, providing safety, academic support, and social connections while addressing critical community needs. Despite the importance of OST programs, many face significant challenges, including funding gaps, staffing shortages, transportation barriers, and limited access to resources. Addressing these issues is essential to ensure access to equitable opportunities for students and families.

Beyond the Classroom, launching this year, will feature a rolling application process, with regular review and award cycles to ensure timely support. Rapid Response grants allow OST providers to act quickly and effectively, enhancing their ability to serve families and adapt to changing circumstances. Beyond the Classroom grant funding is meant to alleviate unexpected needs. It is not intended to enhance or expand current programming. Examples may include facility emergencies, such as equipment failure due to age or usage, a sudden increase in demand for services due to a natural disaster, community trauma, or local emergency, or other unanticipated organizational need.

- **Free Tax Prep:** Led by the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, the Free Tax Prep Coalition provides free tax preparation services at more than 20 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites. The coalition ensures that as many people as possible keep what they earn through programs such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credits.

A partnership with the PA 211 call center bolsters the coalition's ability to schedule tax appointments across the region and connect taxpayers to other relevant resources and services. The results are extraordinary, creating real financial benefit for low-income families across the region. Since 2009, nearly 3,900 Free Tax Prep volunteers, in combination with our self-serve MyFreeTaxes.org website, have prepared 130,000 tax returns at no cost to taxpayers, generating \$121 million in refunds, saving \$29 million in tax prep fees in our region.

- **Guaranteed Basic Income Pilot Program:** Through this pilot program, a small group of single women with children were provided with unrestricted direct cash payments and financial coaching and support. The goal is to provide resources and agency to move to help people move to financial stability so that more costly interventions, such as eviction prevention, aren't needed. Recipients experienced greater stability, increased physical and mental health, and increased positive family engagement. Based on the success of the pilot, United Way is diligently advocating for expansion of the program at the federal and state level. This program was on pause in 2024-2025 but will reopen in 2025-2026.

Community Partnerships: Community partnerships help us use our convening power to share leadership and develop ideas and collaborations to create lasting systems change. We invest our time and leadership but do not fund or seek funding for these initiatives.

- **Westmoreland Housing Advisory Board:** United Way leadership staff serve on the executive committee of the Westmoreland County Housing Advisory Board, which brings together multiple stakeholder groups who meet, collaborate and directly report to the Westmoreland County Department of Human Services on ways to address the county's most pressing housing needs.
- **Western Pennsylvania Early Literacy Team (WPELT):** Literacy is the building block upon which the rest of a child's education is built, but by grade three many children in our

region are not reading at grade level. Through WPELT, United Way brings together individuals, school district representatives, community organizations, libraries and others invested in early literacy . We meet multiple times a year to share resources and network to mobilize the community to promote early literacy activities for children. Members share collective resources such as literacy kits and free books, which are provided to families at all income levels to instill a joy of reading at an early age.

- **Alliance for Access and Assets: Building Financial Power Together:** People with disabilities experience unique financial challenges, even more so if they are also Black or Brown, from an ethnic minority, and are low-income. This coalition brings together nonprofits, local government, local organizations focused on economic and racial equity and disability and financial inclusion partners to strengthen the financial stability and resilience of individuals at the intersection of race, ethnicity, disability and poverty. In partnership with Neighborhood Allies, with technical support from NDI and financial support from JP Morgan Chase, the group works to create a more disability-friendly approach to equity in the greater Pittsburgh region.
- **Gun Violence Prevention:** In 2022, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that for the first time in U.S. history, gun violence ranked as the primary cause of child deaths. That same year, the American Medical Association adopted policy actions that recognized gun violence as a national “public health crisis.” In 2023 and 2024, the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, in partnership with The Pittsburgh Foundation and the University of Pittsburgh’s Institute of Politics, presented three public forums that featured community leaders and experts offering pathways to solutions to gun violence. Following this series, the three organizations released a summary of the sessions and recommendations to save children’s lives and restore public health.

IMPROVING LIFE FOR EVERYONE IN OUR REGION.

United Way, by nature of our mission, invests in every area where people experience inequity, from food security, access to affordable and safe housing, transportation, child care and health care costs, to access to good jobs, education and out-of-school time experiences. These investments benefit everyone: when everyone has enough to eat, a safe place to stay, a good job and is able to pursue their education, our entire community thrives.

The needs are great. A review of contacts to our 211 help center found that 72% of 211 contacts came from women and 46% of contacts to 211 came from people who identify as Black.

How we benefit women and children. All people deserve stability, fulfillment and the ability to reach their potential. United Way invests in agencies serving people with the greatest needs. We know that women and children have unique circumstances and needs, as do people who identify as BIPOC and people with disabilities.

In 2024, United Way awarded \$7.5 million through our Multi-Year Grants process to more than 100 local partner agencies. Of these, 86 grants totaling \$4.35 million, went to agencies that primarily serve women and children. While these agencies don't only serve women and families, we know that women and children have significant needs.

Community Change Collaboratives are integral to United Way's work. We recently began forming Community Change Collaboratives that bring agencies together to help us innovate. This guidance has helped us understand how to best support smaller, community-based organizations, leading, for example, to the creation of Community Food Solutions, now in its third year of grantmaking, and also our Digital Navigator Network, which brings low-cost internet, devices and training to communities that need them.

WOMEN UNITED

What is Women United? Women United is a donor group whose members believe in and support the mission of United Way. Our nearly 2,000 strong and passionate members represent a wide variety of age groups, backgrounds, workplaces, and interests and are committed to improving our community. Since its inception in 2001, our Women United chapter has raised \$142 million. Last year, our members contributed \$8.38 million for United Way's work.

How do you become a member? A donation at a Bridges or Tocqueville Society level provides entry into Women United. One of the country's largest donor networks, Women United's 2,000+ strong and passionate members represent a wide variety of age groups, backgrounds, workplaces, and interests who are committed to improving our community.

Women United is a valuable networking organization, and we want as many people as possible to benefit from it. United Way is known as a connector and a convener. Our Women United group has developed a well-deserved reputation as a networking space for women and their allies. Our members not only give together: we uplift one another, celebrate one another's successes and turn to one another for career connections and advice.

What's your why? Women United helps you focus on your passion. Every member has a personal reason for choosing to support United Way and Women United. That personal passion – plus our ability to convene thought leaders, and to volunteer and give collectively – is only available at this scale through Women United. We provide a forum for women and allies to connect, to learn and to act in ways that are much more powerful than any one of us could achieve on our own.

Everyone is welcome. Your membership in Women United is an opportunity to elevate the needs of our entire community. When our membership reflects the entire community — across race, geography, gender identity, age and ability — Women United is better able to advocate for quality of life for everyone. Your presence, your lived experience and your voice make United Way stronger and our work more relevant.

CORPORATE VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT PROJECTS

What is new in 2025?

All corporations can host one exclusive volunteer or engagement this fiscal year.

What activity counts as their exclusive project?

Any United Way Days project, a Packing for Impact event or a poverty or economic mobility simulation held for the company.

What activity doesn't count as their exclusive project?

Collection drives, mini-engagement activities held as part of a campaign event, speaker's bureau engagement or participation in any United Way-led event.

Do any companies get more than one project?

The following 10 companies may have up to three exclusive events this fiscal year:

- Baird
- Covestro
- First National Bank
- S&T Bank
- Highmark/AHN
- Kennametal
- University of Pittsburgh
- PNC
- UPMC
- Westinghouse

What if I really need my company to have more than one exclusive project?

If you think you need an exemption from the policy, please speak to your department head or senior manager. If they agree that we should make an exception, they will contact Wendy. The final decision on exemptions is made by Neil and Wendy and will be based on the senior manager's recommendation and the overall capacity of the volunteer team.

Can someone other than the volunteer team plan and run a volunteer project?

No. The volunteer team maintains United Way's relationships with the agencies and knows which agencies have the most pressing needs. This approach also makes it possible to offer and uphold the same standards across all volunteer experiences.

Can a company do any volunteer project they want to through United Way?

No. Due to increasing demand from agencies on the front lines of human services, we are only offering the projects outlined in the volunteer toolkit and current United Way Days

projects. These projects align with the needs our partner agencies have said are most important right now.

What if a company wants to do multiple projects on the same day?

Under most circumstances, we will not be able to arrange for multiple projects on one day. Exceptions can be made when multiple United Way Days projects are available that meet the needs of the corporate partner. We will also consider coordinating multiple locations for corporate partners for a fee. Any possible fees must be discussed and agreed upon with Adam and the CEM before fees are discussed with the company.

Can a new business partner have a volunteer project?

Yes. All new business prospects must go through the established new business process, as outlined [here](#).

How are we tracking what company does which project?

The volunteer team maintains the list of prospective, confirmed and cancelled projects and can be found on the Volunteer Hub.

How are we communicating about the limitations with our corporate partners?

The [new volunteer toolkit](#) includes language about the number of events and projects focusing on the greatest needs from our agency partners. LINK TO THE TOOLKIT WHEN COMPLETE.

What is the process to ensure the volunteer team, corporate engagement manager and the employee engagement champion are all on the same page?

When a company contact reaches out to either their CEM or a member of the volunteer team about an exclusive project, we should follow these steps:

1. Ensure the volunteer team member or the CEM is aware of the request.
2. The volunteer team should review to confirm if an exclusive project has already been hosted for the company. (No? Move to step three. Yes? Move to step six)
3. The CEM should confirm if the company contact is the EEC and determine if any other projects have been discussed with the EEC or planning committee.
4. If the company contact is not the EEC, the CEM should reach out to the EEC and inform them about the exclusive event request and have the EEC determine if that event should move forward or not. The CEM should provide an update to the volunteer team on the decision from the EEC and the status of the event.
5. Either the CEM or volunteer team member should respond to the original request,, based on who received the original request, copying the EEC, to either move forward with event planning or inform the contact of the decision by the EEC not to host the event.

6. The volunteer team member should respond to the request, copying the CEM and EEC, that an exclusive event has already been held by the company and we are unable to host another.

TALKING ABOUT THE CHANGES.

WHY WE ARE CHANGING OUR OFFERINGS.

CAN BE USED EXTERNALLY

We are aligning all we do with the greatest community needs. United Way has one of the most robust volunteer programs in our region. We are constantly looking for ways to improve what we do to rise to the most pressing community needs. We communicate regularly with more than 100 agencies in the region to ask them what they truly need. What we are hearing is that food, housing and utilities costs — all affected by inflation — are creating unprecedented demand for assistance, often from people who are working and who have never reached out for help before.

Meeting these pressing needs means that we cannot do things as we have in the past.

This new reality means that we must redirect our volunteer offerings to activities that align with pressing community needs right now. Rather than repeating what we've done in the past, we have created a new slate of United Way Days volunteer offerings to focus exactly on what agencies need most. A full list of United Way Days activities is available [on our website](#).

We are doing this to make the best possible use of your volunteers' time. We deeply value the time and energy that every volunteer brings, and we know that companies and individuals have limited resources. This new approach assures that we are making the best possible use of every volunteer's time, especially for businesses that carve out volunteer time for their employees.

We know we can rely on our corporate partners to make this shift with us. This new approach may mean that some activities that people loved will no longer be offered. We do not want to disappoint anyone, but we recognize that limited time and resources require us to be more strategic and targeted in our approach.

We are reaching out to you proactively about changes to our Volunteer Engagement offerings. Our goal is to plan with you how to bring your employees and customers along. When we are united in purpose and mission, we can make lasting change in our region.

LANGUAGE ABOUT THE LIMIT ON EXCLUSIVE PROJECTS.

CAN BE USED EXTERNALLY

Our partner agencies are reporting unprecedented demand from the community for food, rent and emergency assistance. To rise to these great needs, United Way is directing our volunteer efforts to meeting specific requests from our partner agencies. Because our resources are limited, we will limit corporate-directed volunteer engagement offerings to one per company. This will ensure we have capacity to lead events that directly align with unmet needs.

LANGUAGE TO TELL A CONTACT THEY CAN'T HOST THEIR EVENT.

USE THIS LANGUAGE AS A GUIDE FOR CONVERSATIONS.

Set the tone: *Enter the conversation with the mindset that our corporate donors and sponsors are our partners in addressing community needs. Have confidence that our partners and sponsors turn to United Way because they know that we make sure that every contribution of time and money goes where it is needed most. We strive to make every experience meaningful and even fun, but our priority is doing what is actually needed most to help our community and our neighbors thrive.*

Version 1: EEC has other plans for their exclusive event.

- It sounds like you/your company have specific ideas about what your exclusive event should be. I know you care deeply about your company's philanthropy and the time that your employees are dedicating to volunteering.
- I know that INSERT ACTUAL NEED here is not what you had in mind, but I want to make sure you know what we're hearing from the agencies on the ground.
- What the community really needs is INSERT ACTUAL NEED right now. I know it may not be what you had in mind, but this need is urgent.
- When people are excited about something (like building a playground or INSERT REQUEST), it can be hard to redirect that energy.
- It's even harder to hear that the reason we are no longer offering a specific activity is because food insecurity, housing insecurity and INSERT NEEDS HERE are increasing drastically.
- Can you work with us and pivot away from what we've done previously so that you and your employees are able to help us meet these rising and critical community needs?
- May I walk you through what we're seeing and hearing from XYZ agency or region? REFER TO ALICE AND 211 DATA.
- We know your volunteer time is limited and valuable and we want to make sure everything we're doing with you really counts.

Version 2: The company already reached their limit for their exclusive event.

- I know your XYZ Event on DATE was amazing and so rewarding. There is nothing we'd like more than to organize more events like that with you.
- I'm sorry to share with you that the agencies on the ground are facing unprecedented demand for food, shelter and other emergencies. It's been truly surprising and at times heartbreaking to hear these stories.
- We are finding that the only way we have the capacity to rise to those emergencies is to dial down some of our corporate engagement offerings and dedicate time and resources to meeting the most critical community needs.

- Would your company be willing to consider making additional investment with United Way as a partner for one of our premier volunteer events, which would potentially allow your employees to have early access to register as a volunteer. ?
- I can coordinate with our volunteer team to get you specific information on what volunteer events are coming up.
- Thanks for considering this.