



**United Way of Dane County**

# **Plan for Community Well-Being Strategies**

January 1, 2025



The Power of Caring. Working for All.



## Introduction

United Way of Dane County mobilizes the caring power of our community so all can thrive. We believe in the power of leadership and collaboration to drive transformative change. For over 100 years, we've partnered with hundreds of local nonprofits, businesses, community leaders, donors and volunteers to create solutions that address the most complex challenges that no single person or organization can solve alone.

Our mission, **to unite the community to achieve measurable results that change lives**, is rooted in innovation and action. By bringing together diverse partners, we deliver forward-thinking solutions and results that improve lives — from advancing health and education to strengthening livelihoods and local resilience, **we connect people to possibilities**.

Imagine a future where families are healthy and strong, where all children can learn and succeed — this is the future we are committed to creating through our [Plan for Community Well-Being](#), a plan built with our community for our community.

Our Plan for Community Well-Being is our updated **Impact Model** — it is **multigenerational, holistic and supports family needs while understanding the systemic root causes and working to address those institutional and structural causes**.

**United Way's Plan for Community Well-Being outlines how we establish and lead collective impact to advance family well-being in Dane County**, including the strategies that inform our investments.

We invest in programs aligned to strategies that have the highest opportunities for meaningful and measurable impact within the impact areas of **Youth Opportunity, Financial Security, Healthy Community and Community Resiliency**. And we regularly convene key stakeholders to update our strategies to ensure our work is informed by the latest research and trends.

The information below describes our strategies and areas of focus.



# > YOUTH OPPORTUNITY

(EARLY CHILDHOOD & EDUCATION)  
HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE REALIZE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL



HOME VISITS • CHILDCARE • TUTORING

## YOUTH OPPORTUNITY: HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE REALIZE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

Every young person deserves the opportunity to thrive. At United Way, we help children get off to a good start and empower youth to reach their full potential by breaking down barriers to success. We advance early childhood education, literacy development, math and critical thinking skills, college and career readiness and family engagement – fostering a future where every young person can realize their dreams.

### Childcare and Early Childhood Development

1. Increase access to high quality, culturally relevant early care and education experiences particularly for Black, Indigenous and Families of Color experiencing poverty.
  - Childcare – group centers, in-home family and family/friend/neighbor care
  - Support high quality home visiting models and programs
  - Family resource centers
  - Parent-child community groups
2. Build caregivers (parents and early care and education teachers) understanding of healthy child development through family and community outreach (outside of childcare, i.e. home visiting).
  - Developmental screenings inclusive of social emotional screenings and increasing access to services.
  - Increase awareness of supportive services and service providers in the community.
  - Best practice childcare teacher/professional training.
  - Educate and provide resources about child development, what they can do as caregivers and how they can improve children's outcomes.





3. Connections to community resources and programs: remove barriers to accessing family support services that allow families to access the resources and services they need to overcome the experience of poverty (collective impact).
  - Financial security support and programs that support housing stability, career pathway development, education and upskilling.
  - Mental health resources for parents and children.
  - Systemic changes in how programs are delivered in a team approach to meet families' needs, versus families needing to access all resources individually and independently (addressing the root cause of problems).
4. Support/influence policy changes that will deepen early learning and development outcomes for children.
  - Educate the community and advocate for structural changes to financial investments in childcare: locally, county and state-wide.
  - Work with UWDC Public Policy Committee to develop a specific set of outcomes and goals related to supporting families who are experiencing poverty with children under the age of 5 in Dane County.
  - Support policy for statewide collaboratives that support increasing access and public funding for solutions to the childcare systemic changes needed.

### **In School, After School and Summer Learning, Literacy Development, Family Engagement and College and Career Readiness (K-12)**

1. Facilitate access to additional learning opportunities to enhance students' mastery of academic content.
  - Focus on third grade reading, eliminating summer reading loss,
  - and completing algebra by 10th grade.
2. Build students' social/emotional and non-cognitive skills.
  - Focus on building non-cognitive and behavioral competencies in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.
3. Ensure students' behavioral health and wellness.
  - Many students and families experience trauma and stress, making mental health and social-emotional learning more important.
4. Foster connection, belonging, leadership and academic success with youth at risk of disconnecting.
  - Engagement and academic achievement go together.
  - A student's school experience, including relationships with adults, feelings of safe, supportive environments and connections to peers, coupled with high expectations for learning, all contribute to a sense of belonging at school and in the community.
5. Recognize family engagement as a key component to improve student successes and outcomes.



# > FINANCIAL SECURITY

(WORKFORCE & HOUSING)  
BUILDING FINANCIAL STABILITY AND STRENGTH



FAMILY HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION • JOBS SKILLS TRAINING • RE-ENTRY SUPPORT

## FINANCIAL SECURITY: BUILDING FINANCIAL STABILITY AND STRENGTH THROUGH FAMILY HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

At United Way, we believe that everyone should have the opportunity to live in an affordable, safe, stable home and for homeownership to be an achievable goal for every family.

Our **Family Homelessness and Affordable Housing** strategies ensure that families can maintain housing and avoid evictions as they work toward financial security.

Our **Job Readiness & Workforce Development** strategies help underemployed individuals gain full time employment at \$18/hour with benefits in order to achieve financial security.

In addition to the strategies listed below, we also focus strategically on specific populations including:

1. Investing in Women and Wealth.
  - Expanding home ownership, retirement security and small business support for Black, Indigenous and Women of Color with children.
2. Re-entry Support.
  - Adult re-entry programming for people returning to our community from prison.

**Family Homelessness Prevention and Affordable Housing:** the Family Homelessness and Affordable Housing strategies ensure that families can maintain housing and avoid evictions as they work toward financial security.

1. Support Quality Case Management for families at risk of or experiencing instability in their housing.



- Case Management is an overarching term that describes staff who support individuals and families with resource navigation, access to resources and planning to meet the family's goals.
2. Increase investments in Housing First Programs.
    - Housing First Programs are strategic partnerships that work to help families into housing quickly after they become homeless.
    - Local programs have historically seen an 83% success rate of families remaining stably housed for one year over the last 15 years.
  3. Invest in Eviction Prevention.
    - Eviction Prevention is supporting families through rental financial assistance, financial planning and budgeting through connections with a case Manager and plan, so families remain stably housed.
    - Our goal is that 87% of families will remain stably housed after 1 year.
  4. Financial coaching specifically partnering with Black, Indigenous and People of Color led organizations already providing financial coaching programming and support services.
    - Financial Coaching assists clients with budgeting, money management and other skills that help them create a financial plan toward financial security as defined by the client.
  5. Invest in home ownership programs.
    - A focus on home ownership is an investment in building generational wealth.
    - Successful home ownership programs include case management, readiness assessments, financial coaching and removing barriers to maintaining your home once you own the home.

### **Job Readiness & Workforce Development: Adult education and job training**

Helping un or underemployed individuals gain full time employment at \$18/hour with benefits in order to achieve financial security.

1. Support Workforce Development.
  - Workforce services are defined as: Employment Assessment, Case management, Customized training, Job Readiness, Job Placement, Job Development, working with the Employer community and Adult Education.
  - Providers offering these workforce components will prepare and connect un or underemployed individuals (who are often within communities of color) to local employers who will adequately compensate, offer benefits and provide a career path, so they can live and thrive in Dane County.
  - Attention should be paid to the Department of Labor Good Jobs Model.



# > HEALTHY COMMUNITY

(HEALTH)  
IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING FOR ALL



**INFANT-MATERNAL HEALTH • MENTAL HEALTH • HEALTH CARE ACCESS**

## HEALTHY COMMUNITY: IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING FOR ALL

United Way works closely with community members to help people overcome barriers to healthy living by working to reduce racial health disparities and increase resiliency and trauma supports – ensuring everyone has the opportunity to live their healthiest life. We also increase access to quality health care, through the HealthConnect Premium Assistance Program.

### Reduce Racial Health Disparities

1. Increase culturally relevant, reflective, and safe wellness models and programs defined and/or led by Black, Indigenous and People of Color.
2. Increase capacity in communities to address health disparities for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (example: invest in Fund Health Programs that are community-based and in which disparities are persistent).
3. Increase community-based health programs that address Black, Indigenous and People of Color. Advance clinic and community linkages to improve health access.
4. Increase patient and/or family information exchange with desire to expand current levels of linkage across the care coordination continuum.
5. Increase community-based maternal child health programming for Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

### Increase Resiliency and Trauma Supports

1. Increase culturally safe and responsive trauma and resiliency programs (example: mental health programming) for Black, Indigenous and People of Color.
2. Cultural adaptation of behavioral or mental health intervention.



3. Embed culture brokers into care teams for individuals and families disengaged from mental health supports due to racism, power dynamics and distrust.



**UNITED WAY 211 (24/7 ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICE COORDINATION)**  
**VOLUNTEER ACTIVATION • NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING • DISASTER RESPONSE**

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## **COMMUNITY RESILIENCY: ADDRESSING URGENT NEEDS TODAY AND ADVANCING A BETTER TOMORROW.**

Every community deserves the opportunity to prosper. Through initiatives in crisis response, such as 211 (24/7 access to resources and service coordination), volunteer activation, nonprofit capacity building and disaster response, we are strengthening the foundation of Dane County and working to build a resilient community ready for any challenge.

### **Why It Matters**

When in crisis, it is challenging to know where to go for help. And, with so many opportunities to help, it is hard to know where to make the most impact. United Way understands the big picture and can mobilize resources that make a difference through [211](#), [Volunteer Center](#) and work as a convener and social impact leader.

When our community is hit with an emergency – like severe flooding, a global pandemic or man-made disaster – it's important to have a unifying force that brings us together to raise resources and rebuild an even stronger community. Through our experience innovating to meet community needs and partnerships, we're uniquely positioned to bring our community together to understand problems, co-create solutions and manage accountability for results.

### **Our Goals**

1. Be a leader in social impact, connect people who need help with people who want to help in efficient and effective ways.
2. Respond to community emergencies and assist in long-term recovery.
3. Inspire individuals and families to get involved by developing meaningful community and corporate volunteer opportunities that build the nonprofit capacity of Dane County.
4. Provide beyond the check support to strengthen the nonprofit ecosystem







THE NUMBER OF  
PEOPLE it TAKES  
to change  
LIVES IN  
Dane  
County...  
ONE



**Be one of the ones to change lives today.**

**Giving through United Way multiplies impact.** For every dollar donated through United Way, the return is **more than six times in total community impact.**

When your donated dollar goes through United Way, an army of United Way volunteers are enabled to find six more dollars through a network of caring connection.

**The Power of Caring. Working For All.**

Learn more or donate at [www.unitedwaydanecounty.org](http://www.unitedwaydanecounty.org)

