

UNITED WAY FOR SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN

Community Impact Overview



UNITED WAY FOR SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND

A gift to United Way for Southeastern Michigan's Community Investment Fund makes the greatest and immediate impact in our region. This fund allows United Way to immediately invest in programs and services to meet our community's most pressing needs.

Flexibility is the key to ensuring your dollars are put where they will do the most good right now.

2-1-1 HELPLINE

United Way for Southeastern Michigan's 2-1-1 helpline is the go-to resource for community members facing everyday needs, as well as in times of a community-wide crisis. Every hour of every day, 2-1-1 connects hundreds – and sometimes thousands – of callers in our region with vital resources like emergency housing, utility assistance, food pantries and more.

Our team helps callers navigate a complicated network of available support services and tracks the rapidly changing landscape of programs and eligibility criteria, maintaining a real-time database of tens of thousands of providers.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES/PROGRAMS:

- Information and Referral Services
- State Benefit Application Assistance
- Community Disaster Response

ADVOCACY

United Way for Southeastern Michigan works directly with lawmakers to promote funding and policy solutions that benefit our community and create long-term, positive change aligned with our mission. We advocate for policies that help families meet their basic needs and achieve economic mobility; help children learn, grow and succeed; and promote equity and civic engagement.

Advocacy funds are used to inform the community about important policy issues and mobilize our network of thousands of dedicated advocates around basic priorities like affordable child care, health care, food security and tax credits for working families.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES/PROGRAMS:

- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Access
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Voter Access and Resources

BASIC NEEDS

Nearly 40 percent of Southeastern Michigan households struggle to afford their basic needs. United Way strategically invests in programs that help families stay safely in their homes and put food on the table while working to improve the efficiency and efficacy the social safety net.

Through one-on-one social navigation and our Connect4Care network, we help families navigate complex assistance programs and create connections between disjointed services to build more holistic, person-centered care, yielding more impactful and long-term results.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES/PROGRAMS:

- Community Information Exchange
- Social Navigation
- Healthcare Services
- Utility Assistance
- Access to Emergency Food and Shelter
- Foreclosure and Eviction Prevention
- Child Nutrition Programs (Better with Breakfast, Meet Up and Eat Up)

CRISIS AND RECOVERY

United Way for Southeastern Michigan works every day to meet the needs of families in our region. But when our community faces a crisis, we must be able to immediately respond to spikes in demand for food, shelter and access to emergency services.

The United Way Crisis and Recovery Fund ensures we are prepared to act when our community needs us most, while our team of trained experts helps those most affected apply for emergency assistance programs.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES/PROGRAMS:

- Crisis and Recovery Fund
- Emergency Housing
- Utility Assistance

DIGITAL INCLUSION

In far too many areas across our region, more than one-third of households still lack access to smartphones, computers and in-home internet access. This creates substantial barriers to work, school, health care and more.

Together with partners like Rocket Community Fund, Microsoft and the city of Detroit, our Connect 313 partnership works to close that digital divide by providing laptops, internet access and other digital support directly to those in need. In the education space, we work with corporate IT and technology leaders to support the technology needs of students and families at United Way's five Community Schools.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES/PROGRAMS:

- Tech United
- Connect 313

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DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

United Way for Southeastern Michigan is committed to deconstructing systemic racism and institutional bias while promoting diversity, equity and inclusion as core values in every aspect of our work.

We strategically invest in organizations led by and serving Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and people most harmed by systemic oppression. Far beyond financial investment, our Racial Equity Fund provides technology, fundraising, data, grantmaking, capacity building and stewardship support to organizations.

We also provide educational and collaborative learning experiences to the community through our 21-Day Equity Challenge.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES/PROGRAMS:

- Racial Equity Fund
- Diversity Leadership Academy
- 21-Day Equity Challenge

EARLY CHILDHOOD

United Way's early child care initiatives are designed to make quality child care more accessible and affordable for everyone. Connect4Care Kids helps families find the child care options and available financial support that works best for them.

Additionally, United Way works with its partners to help care providers earn their Child Development Associate certification, increasing the quality of care at centers in our community. Our Early Childhood Support Network provides training and support for thousands of child care providers and families in our region each year through the Early Childhood Support Network.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES/PROGRAMS:

- Early Childhood Support Network
- Ready4K
- Early Learning Communities
- Developmental Screening
- Connect4Care Kids

ECONOMIC MOBILITY AND FAMILY FINANCES

To help households reach long-term stability, we need to address the root causes and barriers to financial stability and wealth-building. United Way for Southeastern Michigan works with our partners to provide support through financial coaching, transportation support, and increasing access to cash benefits through coordinated awareness and free tax preparation.

Beyond investing in programs that provide immediate assistance, we also launched the Detroit Financial Well-Being Innovation Challenge in 2021, which aims to pilot and grow programs that will address systemic inequities through partnership, testing and community involvement.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES/PROGRAMS:

- Ride United
- Tax Credit Access (EITC and Child Tax Credit)
- Detroit Financial Well-Being Innovation Challenge
- Center for Working Families

EDUCATION AND LITERACY

United Way for Southeastern Michigan works in partnership with schools to provide holistic support to students, families and communities.

Through our Community Schools initiative, we work with educators and school administrators to address all barriers to learning, including academic and literacy support, social and emotional learning, physical and mental health services, and family and community engagement. It all comes together to produce a safe and supportive climate that nurtures child development. Our model also provides access to resources that ensure basic needs are not a barrier to success in school and beyond.

In addition, we are working to improve literacy amongst our region's children by reducing "book deserts"— areas where access to books are scarce, encourage a lifelong love of reading, and help families build libraries at home to foster reading skills.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES/PROGRAMS:

- Community Schools
- My Home LibraryReady4K
- Literacy Fairs
- 313Reads

Learn more about United Way's impact in our community and how we're putting your donations to work at UnitedWaySEM.org.