



UNITED WAY
Southeastern
Michigan

MEETING BASIC NEEDS



THE CHALLENGE

More than 40% of families in Southeastern Michigan struggle to afford basic needs including food, housing and health care. Two out of every five households in Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne counties are forced to make impossible decisions.

Should I buy groceries and diapers, or pay my rent?

Should I fix my car today, or risk it breaking down on the way to work?

How long can I put off my necessary medical care that I can't afford?

OUR SOLUTION

United Way strategically invests in community programs that help families stay in their homes and put food on the table. Whether an individual household is in need or an entire community is facing an emergency, United Way puts resources where they are needed most.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

- 2-1-1 Helpline & Social Navigation
- Connect4Care™ Community Information Exchange
- Crisis & Recovery Support
- Emergency Food & Shelter Program
- Emergency Housing
- Foreclosure & Eviction Prevention
- Health Care Services
- Utility Assistance
- Wraparound Integrated Supports

OUR IMPACT



We awarded nearly **\$3.3 million** in basic needs grants to 66 organizations focused on urgent needs like food access and housing.



More than **690,000 people** got help in the areas of food, health care and housing.



More than **640,000 people** received emergency food and food assistance through programs designed to lower costs for families.



“

No one thinks about going to a shelter as being the best thing that happened to them but in my case, it kind of was. It wasn't always easy – you're sharing a small space with other people in crisis – but it still allowed me to feel hopeful.

Shameika Robertson,
Mother

2-1-1 connected Shameika and her 2-year-old daughter with shelter when they were living in a car. With help from United Way partners, she got back on her feet and now has a home in Inkster.

\$10 per week for one year creates access to a network of emergency food and housing resources for 74 individuals in need of a safety net.

CREATING YOUTH OPPORTUNITY



THE CHALLENGE

Learning starts the day children are born. But more than 40 percent of families in our region struggle to afford quality child care programs and out-of-school supports. Many families also struggle to afford books. Studies show that students from low-income families are more likely to fall behind in reading and learning, preventing them from success in school and in life.

OUR SOLUTION

Children thrive when they have access to safe, supportive and enriching environments. United Way's Youth Opportunity work spans early childhood through college and career readiness. We help families access quality child care, wraparound services and expanded learning opportunities. By focusing on literacy and STEAM supports in classrooms, out-of-school time programming, and a community-based approach to learning and teaching, we work toward more equitable outcomes that prepare children to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

- Building Foundations
- Community Schools
- Connect4Care™ Kids
- Hope Starts Here
- Literacy Fairs
- STEAM Grants & Maker Space
- Summer Discovery

OUR IMPACT



More than 10,000 child care providers engaged in virtual and in-person classes through Early Learning Communities.



More than 33,000 books were distributed to K-12 students through My Home Library book fairs.



Summer Discovery enrolled over 19,000 students in summer enrichment activities.



6,000 backpacks were delivered to students to support them during the school year.



\$500 per week can provide **472 students** access to academic and enrichment support each week.



“

At the end of the year, the child was asked, 'What was the biggest thing that helped? And the game changer for them was getting their own books.

Heather Storey,

A United Way volunteer and Women United committee member, discussing an eight-year-old child she mentored

ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE



THE CHALLENGE

Advocacy is a vital part of United Way for Southeastern Michigan's work. While our investments in direct services and partnerships help meet immediate needs in our region, good public policy is crucial to addressing the root causes of need and inequity.

OUR SOLUTION

Our advocacy work seeks to raise local, state and federal policymakers' awareness of the daily struggles of Southeastern Michigan families and encourages them to make decisions that align with our mission to improve lives in our community. Together, with our partners and supporters, we use our voices to break down barriers to success and create meaningful, sustainable change across our region.

KEY ISSUES IN 2025

- Healthy School Meals for All
- Michigan 2-1-1
- Water Shutoff Prevention
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
- Child Tax Credit
- Medicaid

OUR IMPACT



We successfully advocated to maintain the \$2 million increase in funding for 2-1-1 we obtained in 2023 and received an **additional \$1 million for Michigan 2-1-1** to support a statewide Community Information Exchange.



Successfully advocated for a significant increase to the state **Earned Income Tax Credit** from 6 percent of the federal level to 30 percent, bringing an average of an **additional \$600 per year to ALICE households**.



We supported an increase in funding for Michigan Reconnect so more Michiganders will be able to obtain a degree or participate in a training program. Michigan Reconnect received more than **\$10 million additional dollars** this year which will enable the age for accessing the program to be lowered from 24 down to 21.



Our advocacy in favor of universal school meals was successful, saving Michigan families an average of **\$850 per year**.



Last year, our advocates took
5,546 actions
in support of the
Earned Income Tax Credit,
calling, texting and emailing
their elected officials to vote in
favor of expanding the credit.



PROMOTING PROSPERITY



THE CHALLENGE

Keeping food on the table and gasoline in the tank is a challenge for 1.5 million Michigan residents. Without savings or a support network, most will not achieve financial mobility over their lifetimes, and many are only one minor emergency like a car repair away from crisis and greater instability.

OUR SOLUTION

A family's economic stability impacts the long-term well-being of multiple generations. United Way for Southeastern Michigan helps families toward prosperity, building a strong financial foundation for the future through financial and employment coaching, free tax preparation, barrier-busting transportation support and more.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

- Get The Tax Facts (Free Tax Preparation)
- Ride United

OUR IMPACT



125,000 rides scheduled Ride United, helping people get to medical appointments, work, job interviews and more.



3,600 people saw combined \$7.2 million total increase in net worth through financial, employment and/or income support.



23,000 people filed tax returns through Get the Tax Facts to earn child and earned income tax credits in 2023.



“

Some people are facing serious challenges. It's so important for all of us to be transparent about our own experiences so that we can help someone else and so that we're not all falling off the same cliff.

Javay Coleman

Senior Financial Coach at Matrix,
A United Way partner

\$50 per week for a year would provide 86 rides to work, helping residents with barriers to transportation stay employed.

ADVANCING EQUITY



THE CHALLENGE

Every day, people throughout Southeastern Michigan and across the United States are confronted with systemic barriers based on race, gender, social class, ability, citizenship and other identities. These barriers create gross racial and ethnic disparities in income, education, housing, incarceration rates, health, entrepreneurship and many other pathways to a free and prosperous life.

OUR SOLUTION

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 partner strategically to close the digital divide and ensure people in our region have equal access to the skills, devices and technology needed to engage in the digital world and the opportunity it brings. We also provide educational and collaborative learning and engagement experiences to the community through our 21-Day Equity Challenge, a tool that has been utilized to build and develop equitable, inclusive and restorative workplace and community environments across Southeastern Michigan and beyond.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

- Equity in the Community
- Tech Hubs
- Tech United

OUR IMPACT



28,000+ pieces of technological equipment were provided through Safe Haven and Connect 313.



\$3.2 million granted through the Racial Equity Fund to organizations addressing systemic inequities.



13,000+ community members joined us in 2024 for the fourth annual 21-Day Equity Challenge.



“

We have to keep these conversations going because this is how we advance equity in our community. It's not easy. This is deeply personal work. These are personal experiences – these are people's lives, but it's something we must do if we're serious about equity and inclusion.

Dr. Darienne Hudson

President & CEO

United Way for Southeastern Michigan