



UNITED WAY
East Central
Iowa

2024-25

IMPACT REPORT

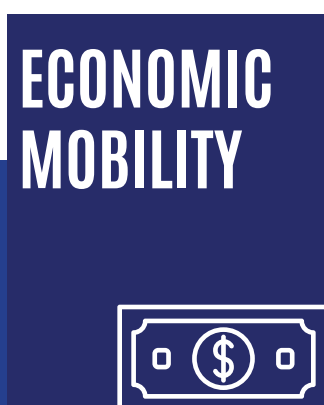
OUR IMPACT IN ACTION



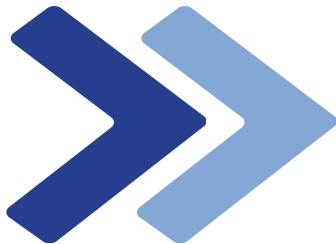
Impact is more than numbers.

It is a parent who secures a living-wage job, a child who enters school ready to learn, a family who finds safe and stable housing. It is also a volunteer who provides tax assistance or a college student who advocates for change on their campus. Impact is change that lasts – shifting conditions, opening doors, and creating opportunities so every individual has the chance to thrive.

United Way offers powerful ways to make a difference through volunteering, investing, and advocating. This year, we have seen that when you give your time and skills, contribute resources to proven solutions, or use your voice to advocate for opportunity, you help create meaningful, lasting change. Each action you take fuels our shared mission to create measurable impact on the areas that matter most - building a stronger, more resilient community for all.



VOLUNTEERING IN EASTERN IOWA



Every hour you spend volunteering helps strengthen our community. Whether you're serving on a committee, preparing taxes, mentoring a student, or sharing your expertise with a nonprofit, your contributions help individuals and families thrive and inspire others to get involved.

United Way makes it easy to put your time and talent to use where they matter most. We connect volunteers with meaningful opportunities at schools, nonprofits, and community projects. We help local organizations tap into skilled volunteers who expand their reach. We mobilize groups to take on big challenges like fostering childhood success, building economic mobility, improving access to healthcare, and supporting safety net services.

From days of service and workplace projects to leadership roles and skills-based volunteering, every effort adds up to measurable change - for individuals, families, and our entire community.

UWECI VOLUNTEERS

- 55+ Initiative RSVP
- Accountability Review Team (ART)
- Agency Executive Advisory Team
- Benton County Project Group
- Board of Directors
- Board of Trustees
- Campaign Cabinet
- Council of Agency Executives
- County Volunteer Center Advisory Committees
- Emerging Leaders United (ELU) Steering Committee
- Executive Committee
- Finance Committee
- Investment Committee
- Nominations/Board Governance Committee
- Operations & Facilities Committee
- Planned Giving Committee
- Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)
- Solutions Teams
- Transportation
- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)
- Women United Committees
- Workplace Volunteer Council (WVC) Steering Committee

**27,749
HOURS**

equivalent
to more than
13 full-time
staff members
working year
round

332 VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer Now connects volunteer opportunities with local area nonprofits in our community. This year **206** nonprofits listed volunteer opportunities on Volunteer Now.

UWECI DAY OF CARING

**57
AGENCIES**

**66
COMPANIES**

**1,654
TOTAL VOLUNTEERS**

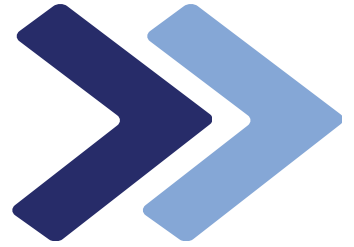
**7,859
HOURS**

\$261,824.82 TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT





ECONOMIC MOBILITY



Economic mobility is the opportunity for individuals and families to improve their financial situation over time, creating stronger local economies and thriving communities. Its impact is seen when families move from merely surviving to becoming stable and, ultimately, thriving. Advancing to higher-wage jobs, reducing debt, building savings, and securing stable housing not only changes a family's lifestyle, it creates ripple effects that span generations.

United Way plays a critical role in this work. We strategically invest resources into programs that help families progress along the economic mobility continuum and advocate for the conditions that make long-term upward mobility possible for all.

6,088

individuals served through quality and affordable housing programs

83%

of individuals served, maintained, or improved housing situation

3,585

individuals supported through workforce programs

81%

obtaining or improving employment

VITA
VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE

**2,025 TAX
RETURNS PREPARED**

\$2,323,384

FEDERAL TAX RETURNS

\$480,787

STATE TAX RETURNS

\$2,804,171

TOTAL RETURNS

VITA PROGRAM SPONSORS:



Transamerica™

JONES COUNTY SUPERVISORS



1,111

individuals served at the Opportunity Center receiving support with top needs such as job applications and resumes.



By offering resources such as job search support, digital literacy training, career development, and connections to social services, the Opportunity Center addresses real barriers that many individuals face in achieving economic stability and personal growth."

— ERIN NORWOOD OPPORTUNITY CENTER PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Economic mobility and systems change go hand in hand. Creating lasting solutions means going beyond temporary fixes - it requires transforming the systems that shape people's lives.

That's where United Way plays a unique role. We invest in programs that help individuals build stability while also aligning resources, bringing partners together, and using data to drive collective action. Together, we work to create a community where everyone has the opportunity to move upward and thrive.

One solution we want to highlight is the Opportunity Center at Ladd Library. The Opportunity Center is a collaborative effort between UWECL, the Cedar Rapids Public Library, Kirkwood Community College, HACAP, and the City of Cedar Rapids. Designed as a single-entry point for individuals seeking services, it works to create equitable and sustainable workforce systems.



CHILDHOOD SUCCESS



Childhood success is crucial in the early ages of childhood, and it doesn't end there. When children start school ready to learn, read at grade level, and grow up in safe, supportive environments, they are far more likely to graduate, pursue higher education or career training, and become engaged, productive adults. Strong early learning and out-of-school supports not only shape a child's future but also strengthen families, break cycles of poverty, and build a more skilled, resilient workforce for our community.

United Way advances childhood success by funding proven programs that support early development, out-of-school learning, and youth mentoring. We strengthen this work by connecting volunteers to opportunities like tutoring and mentoring and by partnering with local companies to support children through large-scale projects. UWECL envisions a community where every child has the chance to learn, grow, and succeed.

1,402

children served to access early childhood resources

88%

children improved social-emotional skills through early childhood and school-aged programs

17,951

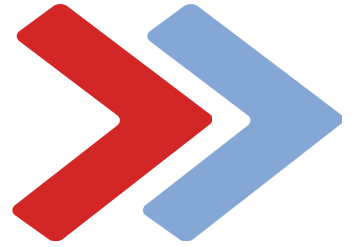
children provided support and access they needed to be successful through after-school and summer programs



Volunteers play a vital role in helping children thrive. In Benton County, the Project Group supported Belle Plaine Elementary by cutting out 8,000 cars and 1,070 awards for a classroom point system, giving students a fun way to earn rewards and stay engaged. Across the region, three kit builds, or group volunteering projects of putting together backpacks filled with school supplies or other items, advanced childhood success. Van Meter employees assembled 150 snack kits for Tanager's Freedom School, while Cummins and Transamerica volunteers donated more than 300 backpacks filled with supplies for Foundation2. These efforts ensured that kids had the tools, encouragement, and support they need to succeed in school and beyond.



ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE



In East Central Iowa, barriers like cost, transportation, language, limited awareness, and a shortage of providers make it hard for many to access the healthcare they need. When individuals and families can get care, the results are transformative: they can manage chronic conditions, receive preventive services, and access mental health support. This means fewer missed workdays, healthier children who are ready to learn, and greater stability for households. At a community level, better access to care strengthens the workforce, eases pressure on emergency services, and builds a healthier, more resilient Eastern Iowa.

United Way helps make this possible by funding programs that connect people to affordable care and critical health services. We also mobilize volunteers to provide direct support, outreach, and help navigating complex healthcare systems - ensuring more people have the opportunity to live healthier lives.

8,494

individuals served by
healthcare programs

92%

of individuals reported
improved health, well-being,
and functioning

WOMEN UNITED®

Women United supporters are an inspiring group that unites the caring power of women to ensure all women in our community have access not only to medical care, but also supportive services.

4 PROGRAMS

=

**2,983 WOMEN WITH
GREATER ACCESS TO
HEALTHCARE**

+

**89% OF WOMEN
REPORTING IMPROVED
ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE**

For seniors in our rural counties, access to healthcare is often a challenge, but volunteers are making a difference. Through UWECI's Medical Transportation program, seniors get to essential medical appointments, helping them stay healthy and independent. The Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) volunteers provide trusted guidance on Medicare, easing confusion and reducing costs.

The Belle Plaine Project Group brightens a local nursing home with holiday signs and special treats, reminding older adults that they are valued and cared for. In one year, this group put together 270 treat bags and made 495 signs for residents. Together, these efforts ensure seniors have both the care and the connection they need to thrive.



SHIIP
IOWA'S MEDICARE
RESOURCE

SENIOR HEALTH INSURANCE INFORMATION PROGRAM (SHIIP)

228 individuals served

\$66,393 saved

MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

SPONSORS: Benton County
Supervisors, Jones County
Supervisors, Physicians Clinic of Iowa
and St. Luke's Foundation

BENTON COUNTY

65 clients

24,509 miles

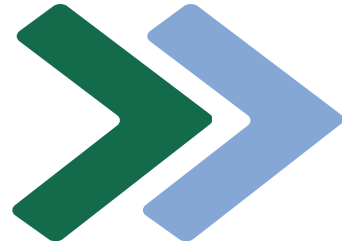
JONES COUNTY

54 clients

20,738 miles



SAFETY NET SERVICES



Basic needs like food, shelter, and crisis services form the community's safety net, catching individuals and families when they face hard times and helping them recover. These supports reduce stress, prevent homelessness, and allow families to focus on long-term goals instead of daily survival. A strong safety net prevents crises from escalating, reduces costs for hospitals and schools, and keeps families connected to work, creating a more stable and resilient community.

UWECI helps keep this safety net strong and responsive by funding food security, housing programs, and other essential services. We connect volunteers and companies to opportunities, like Meals on Wheels, that expand nonprofit capacity and impact. As a key partner in the homeless system, we also convene organizations and advocate for solutions that move people from crisis to stability.

1,012

individuals provided
housing assistance

11,365,213

pounds of food
provided

259,168

meals provided

2,519

individuals were supported
by programs providing
access to meals

HOMELESS SYSTEMS

The goal of the Homeless Systems work is to build a coordinated, equitable homeless response system that prevents and ends homelessness through systemic solutions. The goal is that homelessness in our community is rare, brief and non-recurring.

LANDLORD & TENANT SUCCESS INITIATIVE

A major success this year has been the launch of an innovative pilot project—the Landlord and Tenant Success Initiative – made possible through our partnership with Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust. The initiative's goal is to successfully house 30 housing-challenged tenants with private, for-profit landlords in Linn County for the full length of a lease term. By bringing together financial partners, landlords, and support services, this project not only provides stable housing for individuals who face barriers but also builds a replicate model for addressing housing challenges in our community.

54 landlords have reached out expressed interest in the program – this is a 45% increase from last quarter.

LANDLORD & TENANT SUCCESS INITIATIVE

23

enrolled

21

housed

70%

completed Tenant
Academy incentive

100%

received quarterly incentive

0

lease violations

100%

passed in unit inspections



Over the past year, we've seen firsthand how powerful a coordinated homeless response system can be. By aligning data, programs, and best practices, our community is not just responding to homelessness, we are building lasting solutions. Systems-level work allows us to see the bigger picture, identify gaps, and create collaborative strategies that truly change lives. Together with partners, like United Way, we are proving that homelessness is not inevitable, it is solvable."

— J'NAE PETERMAN
HOMELESS SYSTEMS MANAGER



WHEN YOU USE YOUR VOICE TO ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE THROUGH UNITED WAY, YOU SUPPORT OUR MISSION TO CREATE A THRIVING COMMUNITY FOR ALL. >>

UWECI provides advocacy groups and programs such as Board Orientation & Leadership Development (BOLD) and Civic Circle. These programs engage community members to get involved in causes and issues they are passionate about and help develop our community's success.

COMMUNITY BOLD



“

Before BOLD, I had limited knowledge of what serving on a nonprofit board truly involved; now, I have a strong understanding of the responsibilities and the importance of ensuring a mutual fit between myself and the organization. Observing nonprofit board meetings was an especially valuable part of the experience, offering real-world insight into board dynamics and allowing me to build meaningful connections with current board members.”

COLLEGIATE BOLD



“

Branching out into the Collegiate BOLD program has been an awesome opportunity to grow my professional skills and build connections in the Cedar Rapids community! As a college senior who is still unsure of life after graduation, this program has revealed many possible avenues and given me hope that I will find a career, in which I will love what I do and the community that I serve, no matter what.”

CIVIC CIRCLE

“

I came into this experience thinking very little about civic engagement. I am leaving this experience knowing just how important civic engagement is and seeing the opportunities everywhere!”



**BUILDING EQUITY IN
SERVICE SPONSOR:**



**CEDAR
RAPIDS
BANK &
TRUST**

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP



UWECI's role in the community is multifaceted. We are an...

INVESTOR

ACTIVATOR

CONNECTOR

CAPACITY BUILDER

Our greatest superpower is knowing our community – its needs, its opportunities, and its people. We continue to deepen this knowledge by building relationships and serving on essential committees, groups, boards, and coalitions, such as the Anamosa Rotary and the Housing Fund for Linn County.

We also strive to be champions for our community. This includes providing volunteer training through Volunteer Iowa to Jones County and serving as a strong United Way Worldwide network citizen by helping another local United Way develop its own BOLD program.

Partnership and collaboration are where United Way shines – because we know that real impact takes all of us. Two great examples this year include:

- Partnering with the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation to bring forward and lead community discussions around the film Uncharitable.
- Working with Kirkwood Community College and the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation to develop Learn to Lead, a nonprofit manager series that strengthens leadership across our sector.

Through these roles and partnerships, United Way not only responds to needs but also builds the conditions for lasting community impact. We are deeply grateful to our Nonprofit Partners, Community Partners, Donors, Businesses, and Stakeholders – your support and partnership make this work possible.



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