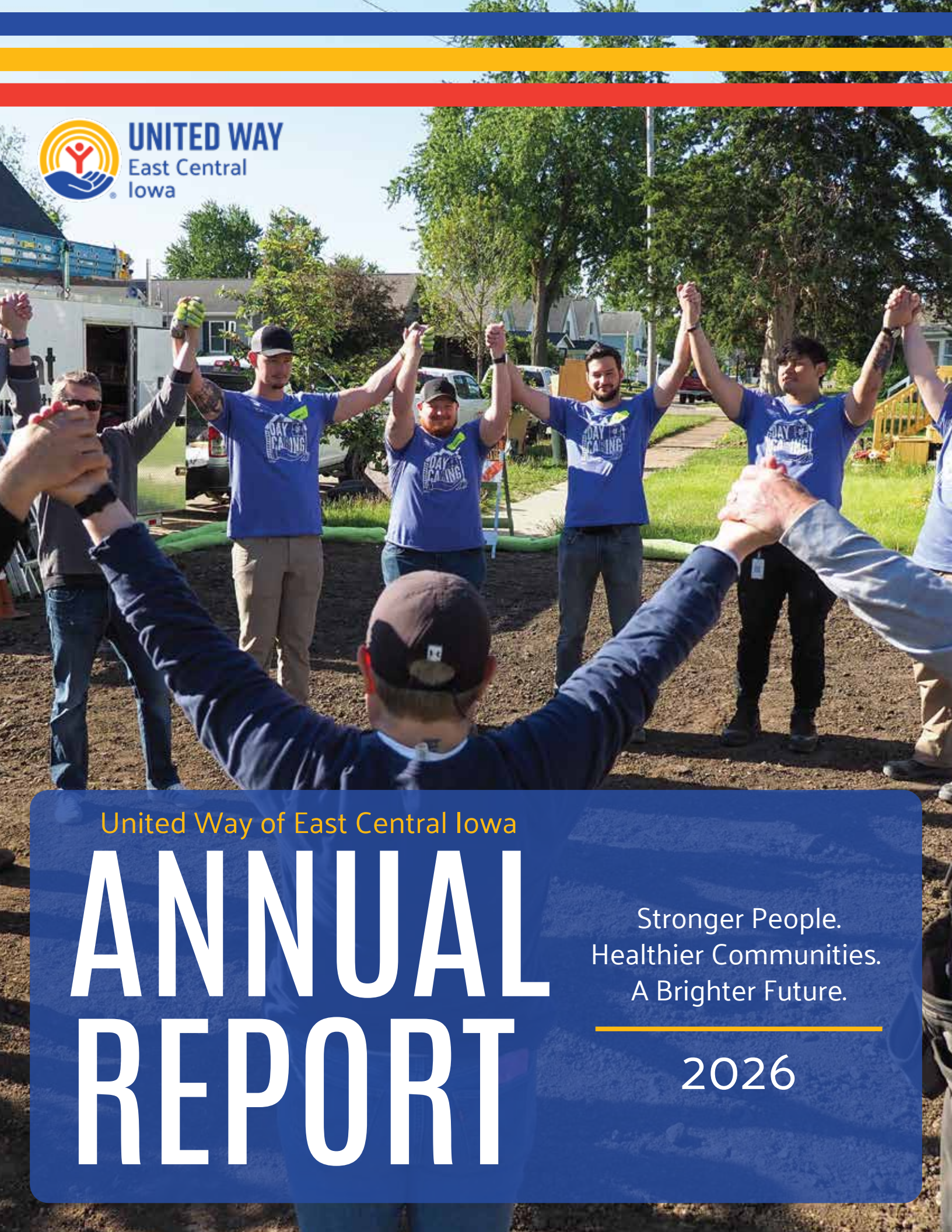


UNITED WAY
East Central
Iowa

United Way of East Central Iowa

ANNUAL REPORT

Stronger People.
Healthier Communities.
A Brighter Future.

2026

A message from

OUR LEADERS

Over the past year, United Way of East Central Iowa (UWECI) has doubled down on who we are as an organization – a trusted community leader that identifies top community needs, brings partners together, and implements effective solutions that change lives.

While the nonprofit landscape continues to shift, that does not stop us, our partners, and our volunteers from doing the work that needs to be done to make East Central Iowa stronger.

In this annual report, you will read firsthand how we are impacting the lives of individuals and families in our community. It's more individuals being housed. It's people getting a tax refund through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program to help pay off bills. It's senior citizens getting to their medical appointments. It's young professionals growing their leadership skills and getting involved in their community.

One thing we know is that strong communities don't happen by accident. They are built when people come together and help one another to transform East Central Iowa and change the story for our friends and neighbors.

Thank you for joining us in building a thriving community. We cannot do impactful work in our communities without the support of our volunteers, investors, and advocates – together, we can do amazing things.

Once again, thank you for your support, and we hope this annual report inspires you to join us in the ever-important work of making our community a better place and one where all can thrive.



Kristin Roberts
UWECI President & CEO



Melissa Winter
UWECI 2025-2026 Board Chair

Kristin Roberts



Addressing Top Needs in Our Community

At the core of what we do at United Way of East Central Iowa is addressing the top needs of our community. Through our research and insights from our community partners, the top issue our community is facing is housing, specifically, homelessness.

Through a unique collaboration between United Way, local government, nonprofits, and other key partners, homelessness continues to be positively impacted. **We are all working together, as collaborators of the Homeless Systems Initiative, to address causes of homlessness and prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place.**

"By aligning data, programs, and best practices, our community is not just responding to homelessness, we are building lasting solutions," said J'nae Peterman, Homeless Systems Manager. "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."



Success in Action

A key part in our community seeing a decrease in homelessness is a direct result of partners, across many sectors, coming together to help house our neighbors in need. One example of that work in action is our community's Landlord-Tenant Success Initiative, a pilot program aimed at pairing for-profit landlords with housing-challenged tenants for a full lease term. The project was made possible with generous support from Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust.

The Landlord-Tenant Success Initiative had an initial goal of housing 30 individuals. The program far exceeded that goal and to date, has housed 88 adults and 62 children, for a grand total of 77 households.

Partnering for Positive Outcomes

As homeless system partners, Waypoint, Willis Dady, and HACAP helped 90% of tenants they served over the past year achieve successful housing outcomes, strengthen housing stability, and help individuals and families move toward long-term independence. These partnerships reflect the importance of organizations working together to change the story for our neighbors in need.

12%

decrease in homelessness in our community over the past year.

35%

increase in homelessness in the state of Iowa.

> "Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust is dedicated to being a strong partner in our community's efforts to reduce homelessness and support individuals experiencing housing instability."
>
> **- James D. Klein**
> President & CEO of
> Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust

Millions Come Back to Community Through VITA



At UWECI, we believe every person should have the opportunity to move beyond survival and build a stable, secure future. This means friends and neighbors have a safe home and a quality job, creating a strong foundation for success. That starts with having resources available to manage tasks, like paying monthly rent and putting food on the table, and our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program helps make that possible for local families year after year.

VITA provides free tax preparation services to eligible individuals and families. Volunteers make the program possible, recording more than 4,000 hours completing tax returns, greeting clients, and assisting with paperwork.

As a result of the 2026 tax season, $3,085,075 came back into our community through State and Federal tax refunds. Each of those dollars are able to go back into the pockets of local families, often allowing them to invest in education opportunities, maintain their lives, pay off debt, or save for a rainy day. To summarize the impact our VITA program makes on those in need, this program is **life-changing.**



4,000+
volunteer hours this tax season.

$3,085,075
in total refunds.

1,995
tax refunds filed -- free of charge.

“People are relieved and grateful that they do not have to try and figure out the complicated rules and regulations of our current tax system, and they can get necessary help to complete this stressful task. In my experience as a volunteer, I get a little bit of every position – greeter, intake specialist, tax preparer, quality reviewer, and site coordinator. This allows me to get enjoyment from many different aspects of the program.”

- **Patti Jakoubek**
  VITA Site Coordinator & Volunteer

Improving Healthcare,

One Mile and Plate at a Time

We believe every person should have the opportunity to achieve their best health and well-being. For senior citizens across our service area, that often starts with a few things we might think are simple – a ride to a doctor's appointment and food on the table.

That's why United Way offers a Medical Transportation Program in Benton and Jones counties, which provides free rides for senior citizens to non-emergency medical appointments. With most appointments happening in the Cedar Rapids-Iowa City corridor, it can be challenging for seniors to access high-quality healthcare, while continuing to live at home and maintain their independence.

Over the past year, UWECI's Medical Transportation Program volunteers drove 103 clients to 634 appointments. Volunteers and clients hit the road, driving more than 46,000 miles and often connecting with one another along the ride.

In addition to ensuring senior citizens get to their medical appointments, it is also a priority to ensure they have access to nutritious food in their community. Through United Way's community partnerships with local agencies, 11 million pounds of food and 205,735 meals were provided to support older adults and individuals facing food insecurity.

Access to healthy, nutritious food is more than just putting food on the table. It is helping older adults manage chronic conditions, maintain independence, and improve overall health and well-being.



"I don't know what I'd do without these drivers. I do not own a car, and I can't afford to. I enjoy the conversation during my rides, and I feel safe with every one of my drivers."

- **Jones County Transportation Client**

103 clients.

634 medical appointments.

46,000+ miles driven.

Our Impact By the Numbers

Through strategic grantmaking and partnerships, UWECI invests in programs that address our community's most pressing needs and create opportunities for individuals and families to thrive. Each funded program plays an important role in a larger network of support, helping people build financial security, improve their health, access opportunities, and overcome barriers to stability.

By connecting these individual efforts to shared community goals, we strengthen our community's entire system of care, maximize the impact of every dollar invested, and build a stronger, more resilient community for all.



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. Programs like our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program, which puts money back in families' pockets through free tax preparation, and the Opportunity Center, which connects people to jobs and essential resources, are two ways we make that upward mobility a reality in our community.

3,585
individuals supported through workforce programs

Access to Healthcare

United Way helps make this possible by funding and providing programs that connect people to affordable care and critical health services. Through Women United and programs, such as the Medical Transportation Program, Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP), and the Belle Plaine Project Group, we are ensuring that every person in our community can access the healthcare they deserve.

91,000+
individuals served

92%
positive outcomes

Childhood Success

UWECI and its partners advance childhood success by funding proven programs that support early development, out-of-school learning, and youth mentoring. We envision a community where every child has the chance to learn, grow, and succeed.

6,700+
youth supported

87%
positive growth

Safety Net Services

UWECI's partners help keep the community safety net strong and responsive by providing food security, housing programs, and other essential services. One example of that work in action is the Landlord-Tenant Success Initiative, a pilot program that pairs for-profit landlords with housing-challenged tenants for a full lease term, made possible with support from local government, nonprofits, and other key partners.

88
adults housed

62
children housed

Inspiring the Next Generation

Going through college can be a pivotal time in a young adult's life. For many, it's where they figure out their career path, learn new life-long skills, and begin impacting our community.

For interns at Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust and TrueNorth Companies, United Way's InternConnect program provided an opportunity to explore the community, discover passions, and create a plan for getting involved.

One of those students is Sheyla Madrigal, a University of Iowa student, who participated in InternConnect as TrueNorth's Community Impact Intern.

Early on in the program, Sheyla realized just how quickly you can find your place in our community.



Sheyla Madrigal
University of Iowa Student
TureNorth's Community Impact Intern &
InternConnect Participant

> "It clicked to me that community has been here all along. Cedar Rapids is close to my heart, and InternConnect really reinforced to me that I want to do my life here. This community is constantly growing, and I was able to connect with people who are along for that ride."
> - **Sheyla Madrigal,** InternConnect Participant

UWECI's InternConnect completed its second year in 2026 and mimics the Civic Circle program, which aims to create space for thoughtful discussion about civic engagement.

"InternConnect is a program that is committed to helping college interns deepen their understanding of civic leadership and community engagement," said Senior Manager, Community Outreach & Engagement, Angelica Vannatta. "Students, like Sheyla, are able to connect with community members, hear from local leaders, and engage in conversation about issues in the community. It's our hope that at the end of the program, students will identify causes they are passionate about, create a plan to get involved, and make a positive difference in this world."

It's programs like InternConnect and Civic Circle that inspires individuals to volunteer, invest, and advocate in their own communities. For some, like Sheyla, it makes a difference for future community involvement.

"I could see myself serving on United Way's Board one day," Sheyla said. "All of the pillars United Way stands for I could see myself getting involved with because of what I learned through InternConnect. It was a really good experience."

Sharing United Way's Value

About three years ago, 2026-2027 Board Chair Nick Nielsen had a conversation with a co-worker at GreatAmerica, considering ways to get involved with United Way of East Central Iowa.

That co-worker was Constance Losch. Fast forward to now, she leads GreatAmerica's United Way workplace campaign and is a strong community champion for UWECI.

> It's interesting to help others see the value United Way brings to the community. It's a great opportunity to see the impact their dollars can make in our community and helping them make that connection with United Way."
>
> - **Constance Losch**
> GreatAmerica

In her leadership role with GreatAmerica's workplace campaign, Constance takes great pride in sharing how United Way makes a difference in the community. She considers it similar to a personal trainer.

"If I go to a gym with a personal trainer, they show me what to do, equip me, and I know that I've done the most I can do with the time I have," Constance said. "Giving to United Way is similar. I can find nonprofits I can care about, or I can give to United Way, where they will put the dollars to where they are needed most."



Constance Losch
GreatAmerica

Constance's involvement with United Way goes beyond her workplace's giving campaign, as she also graduated from the BOLD (Board Orientation & Leadership Development) Program in 2025.

The BOLD program provided her with real-world examples of Board service and has led her to be a more prepared Board member for her current position on Waypoint's Board of Advisors and YPN's Board of Directors – two of UWECI's valued partner agencies.

"BOLD is a really helpful way to know what my responsibilities are as a Board member and questions to ask when joining a Board," Constance said. "BOLD equipped me to be better suited to take on commitments and that I am ready to take on what they are asking as a Board Member."

Through these two unique experiences, Constance has been able to develop a sense of purpose in giving back to her community. She gives back VIA United Way – volunteering, investing, and advocating – and strives to make her community a better place.

"There is a lot of fulfillment in life serving your community," Constance said. "I think about how beautiful the impact we can have as a community when we all come together. United Way creates those opportunities to learn, grow, and serve together. If you are looking for an opportunity to be part of something bigger than yourself, United Way is a natural way to get connected with a community of people who care deeply about the places they live and work."

20 Years of Helping Local Women



Over the course of the past 20 years, local women in our community were lifted up by their friends and neighbors through Women United – an Impact Network with UWECI that is committed to uniting funds and resources to ensure the well-being of women in our community.

This past year, Women United celebrated a special milestone – it's 20-year anniversary, providing a time to celebrate and reflect on the incredible impact Women United has made right here in East Central Iowa.

Since its inception in 2006, Women United has raised over $3.8 million and made 59,704 health-related encounters with women possible across Women United-funded programs.

$3.8M+
raised since 2006.

59,704
health-related encounters with women made possible since 2006.

Women United was founded under the leadership of Lois Buntz during her tenure as UWECI President & CEO, and its impact has only grown since. "Women United has continued to be a core part of what United Way does," said Buntz. "The way healthcare has changed over time proves Women United's impact on local women is more critical now than ever."

While times have changed, Women United's steadfast commitment to supporting women's health in our community hasn't. This group of community champions continues to focus on addressing the top needs women face when accessing healthcare: cost, insurance coverage, transportation, and provider shortages.

Women United makes this possible by partnering with local healthcare organizations to offer health-related services to women who are un- or under-insured. With Women United's funding, Area Substance Abuse Council, Community Health Free Clinic, Eastern Iowa Health Center, and HACAP are able to provide services, such as mammograms, annual exams, vision care, dental care, maternal health services, prescription medications, and so much more.

When barriers are removed, local women can access necessary services to keep them healthy for years to come, so they can be the best mother, daughter, teacher, grandmother, and friend to those in their lives.

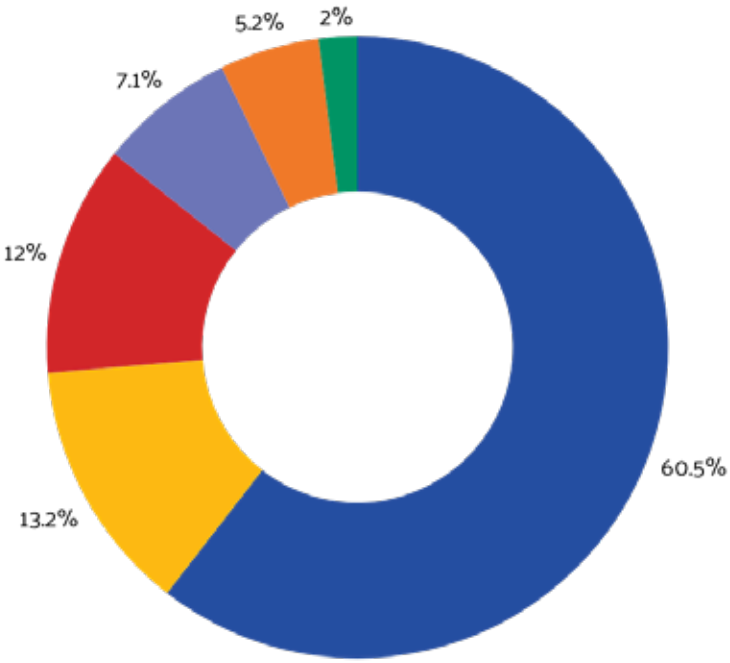
As for what's next for Women United, it's continuing what they have always done – lift up local women and help them achieve their best health.

> "You meet women from all walks of life. It's such a great feeling to work toward the same thing, no matter where you are in life. We are working through challenges and finding solutions."
> - **Jill Lange**
> 2026-2027 Women United Chair

Our Community Makes it Possible

Thanks to our generous donors, dedicated volunteers, and trusted partners, we can do more together.

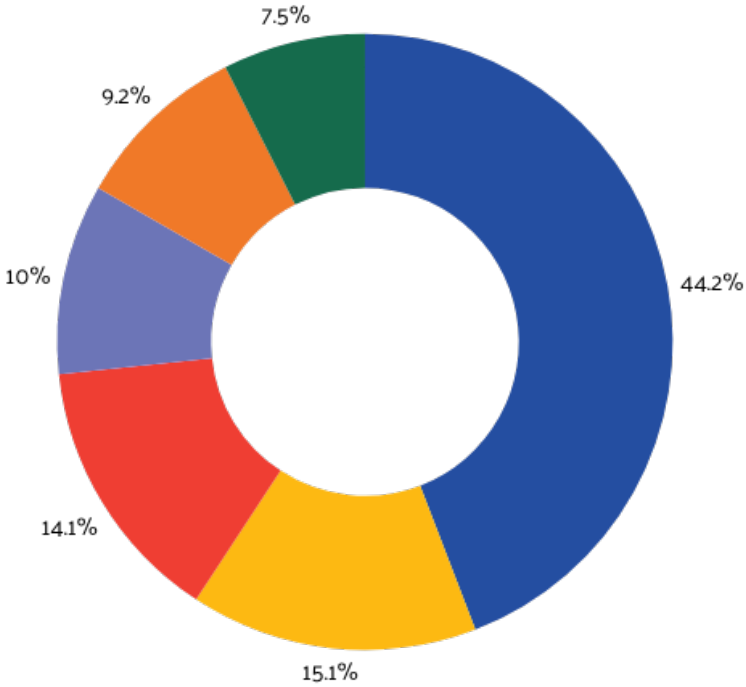
Revenue



- Undesignated Campaign Revenue - $3,940,625
- Grants, Sponsorships & Other Contributions - $860,163
- Investment Income - $780,027
- Donor-Designated Gifts - $464,379
- Rental Revenue - $338,403
- Allowance for Uncollectables - $127,326

Expenses

- Grants to Community Programs - $2,723,000
- Program Investments - $932,499
- Human Services Campus - $867,732
- Management & General - $614,139
- Fundraising - $564,873
- Donor-Designated Gifts - $464,379



THANK YOU

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Nick Nielsen, GreatAmerica Financial Services, Vice Chair
Zach Bohannon, First Interstate Bank, Secretary
Brent Mohasci, Community Volunteer, Treasurer
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Molly Altorfer, Mount Mercy University
Luke Bishop, BAE Systems
Kim Bormann, Aegon
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Angie Corcoran, Hibu
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Dave Schreck, Collins Aerospace (Retired), Past Chair
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Dave Stoltenberg, Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust
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Charlie Schimberg, Community Volunteer
Kyle Skogman, Skogman Companies
John Smith, CRST International
Gary Streit, Shuttleworth & Ingersoll, PLC
John Wasta, Community Volunteer

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Wendy Nielsen, Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust, Co-Chair
Jim Beardsworth, Community Volunteer
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Zach Bohannon, First Interstate Bank
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Pablo Estrada, JPMorgan Chase
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Curt Heideman, Bankers Trust
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Julie Herzog, TrueNorth Companies
Bre Horstman, Skogman Companies
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Dennis Jordan, Alliant Energy
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Beth Lehman, Travero
Kyle Martin, Martin Gardner Architecture
Nicole Mead, Creative Planning
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Gary Streit, Shuttleworth & Ingersoll, PLC
Jessica Walker, East Central Iowa Council of Governments
Jen Welton, Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust
Melissa Winter, St. Luke's Health Care Foundation

FY26 Funded Partners

Affordable Housing Network, INC.
Area Substance Abuse Council (ASAC)
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Cedar Rapids and East Central Iowa
Boys and Girls Clubs of the Corridor
Catherine McAuley Center
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque
Cedar County Public Health
Community Health Free Clinic
Eastern Iowa Health Center
Feed Iowa First
Foundation 2 Crisis Services
Four Oaks Family and Children Services
Goodwill Industries of the Heartland
Hawkeye Area Community Action Program (HACAP)
Hope Community Development Association
Horizons: A Family Service Alliance
Iowa Legal Aid
Kids First Law Center
Matthew 25
Old School Produce Partners
Rural Employment Alternative
Southeast Linn Community Center
UnityPoint Health – St. Luke's Foundation
The Arc of East Central Iowa
United We March Forward
Volunteer Services of Cedar County
Waypoint Services for Women, Children & Families
Willis Dady Emergency Shelter
YPN
YouthPort
Zach Johnson Foundation
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Strong communities don't happen by accident.

They are built when people come together.



ww.uweci.org

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UNITED WAY
East Central
Iowa