



UNITED WAY
South Central Michigan

UNITED IS THE WAY™

2024-2025
IMPACT REPORT





FROM OUR PRESIDENT

What is your legacy?

A legacy is something meaningful and lasting that you create to benefit others.

At United Way, our legacy involves many things. Powerful partnerships built. Basic needs met. Social issues solved. People's lives transformed. Fundamental to our legacy are the values that United Way lives by every day—as we have for over a century.

As you review this Impact Report, you'll see how our commitment to integrity and accountability, our compassion for people and communities, and our inclusive and collaborative approach to serving all—especially those who have been historically marginalized or underrepresented—continue to drive results and change lives.

The future remains challenging. Uncertainty surrounding changes to funding sources, tax rules and emerging needs means our value-rooted legacy is more important than ever.

It's a legacy that delivers \$3.80 worth of impact for every dollar our donors entrust to us.

It's a legacy that harnesses the power of partnership and collaboration to ensure children are fed, families are housed, and people have access to the essentials they need to be healthy, productive, and thriving.

It's a legacy that I invite you to make your own—with us.

Because *United Is The Way*.

Chris Sargent
President & Executive Officer

Executive Leadership Team

Chris Sargent, President & Executive Officer
Jen Hsu-Bishop, Executive Impact & Equity Officer
Heather Garcia, Senior Director of Finance
Teresa Kmetz, Executive Development & Marketing Officer
Natalie O'Hagan, Senior Director of Strategy & Culture
Bethany Stutzman, Senior Director of Community Impact, Programs

UWSCMI Board of Directors

OFFICERS

Jamie Rabe (Chair), Andrews Hooper Pavlik PLC
Stephanie Slingerland (Immediate Past Chair), Kellanova
Maureen Keene (1st Vice Chair), Jackson County ISD
Lisa Garcia (2nd Vice Chair), Western Michigan University
Todd McDonald (Treasurer), CSM Group
Unaa Holiness (Secretary), Michigan Education Association

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Becky Baldwin, Michigan Nurses Association (retired)
Jim Bongiorno, Henry Ford Allegiance Health
Renee Miller Zientek, Michigan State University
Kim Carter, Battle Creek Public Schools
Derek Dobies, Michigan AFL-CIO
Ben Frantz, UAW Local 652
Marcus Glass, Bronson Healthcare Group
Mike Huerta, UAW Local 602
James Johnson Jr., IBEW Local 252
Dave McKinstry, WK Kellogg Co
Andy Richards, Duncan Aviation
Carrie Schneider, Consumers Energy
Chris Tyler, Adventure Credit Union
Satya Veerapaneni, GM Lansing Delta Township
Ashlee Willis, Michigan Premier Events LLC & Lansing Mosaic LLC
Ted Ykimoff, Consumers Energy

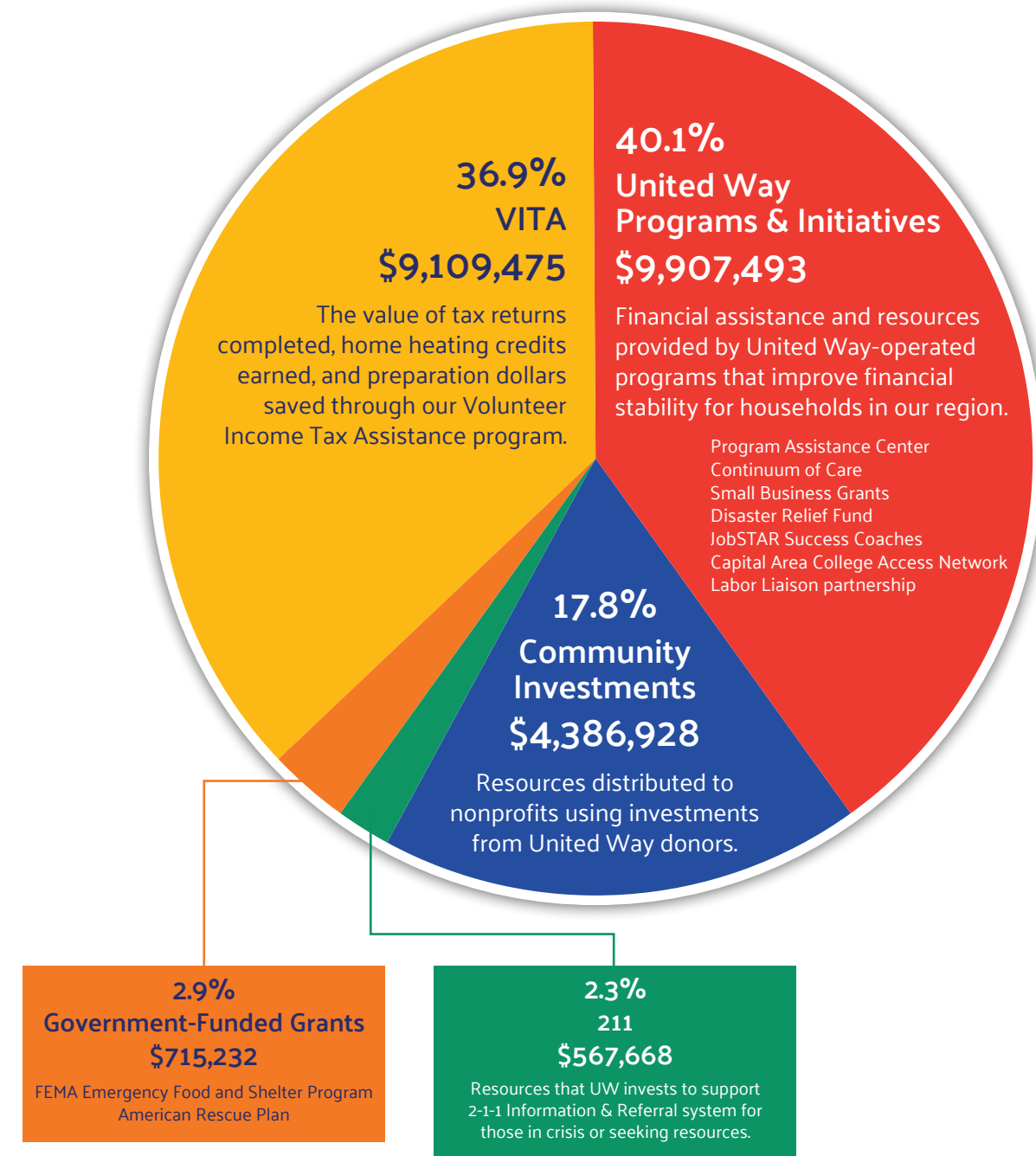


DOLLARS FOR IMPACT

Total investment for April 1, 2024-March 31, 2025

\$24,686,796

For every donor dollar raised, UWSCMI brings an additional \$3.80 into our communities.



STRATEGIC PLAN

April 1, 2025 - March 31, 2030

Communities thrive when every person has the chance to succeed. Our five-year strategy seeks to realize that vision. Created with input from stakeholders across our six-county region, the plan focuses on the needs of people in financial hardship, and persons who have been historically oppressed and marginalized.

WHO WE SERVE

While financial hardship exists for many households across our region, we know that particular populations experience hardship at a higher rate. Because of this, UWSCMI is committed to providing support, resources, and programming that addresses root causes. To accomplish this, we focus on these communities:

- Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)
- Single-headed households with children
- Households headed by individuals 25 and younger or 65 and older
- People historically under-represented and oppressed

People in Financial Hardship

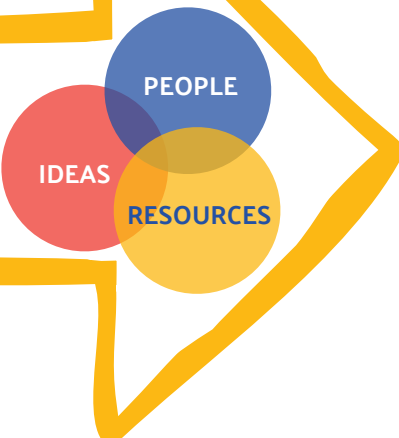
ALICE
Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed

Poverty
Individuals facing extreme hardship

Learn more about ALICE on page 8 of this report.



OUR MISSION
THE ENGINE OF IMPACT
We bring together:



OUR GOALS

EQUITY	COMMUNITY	INTEGRITY	COLLABORATION	COMPASSION	RESULTS
Applying principles of diversity, inclusivity, justice, antiracism, empathy and trust to every facet of our work and our culture, with a firm commitment to historically underrepresented and marginalized people.	Solving the toughest social issues that affect local individuals and families, changing lives and strengthening our region in the process.	Pursuing our work with transparency, accountability and dignity, constantly learning and adapting to the changing needs of our communities.	Working hand-in-hand with communities and partners to honor their voices, build trust, increase impact, and grow diversity in ideas and representation throughout our shared efforts.	Caring passionately for the people we serve, the colleagues we work alongside, and the communities we strive to improve.	Driving impact through innovation, creativity and leadership that brings new ideas, new resources, and equitable, lasting solutions.

Our advocacy work, grantmaking and UWSCMI programs such as our Small Business Loans and Grants, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, JobSTAR, and Capital Area College Access Network help to move households into financial stability.

Financial Stability
Create opportunities for ALICE to move from survival to stability.

Safety Net
Increase access to basic needs support – food, shelter, healthcare/childcare, etc.

Through programs and partnerships such as 2-1-1, Continuum of Care, volunteerism, and grantmaking to partner nonprofits, we ensure our region has a strong safety net in times of crisis.

VISION OF SUCCESS

Strong, caring communities where every person is valued, thriving and connected for the common good.





BUILDING EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES

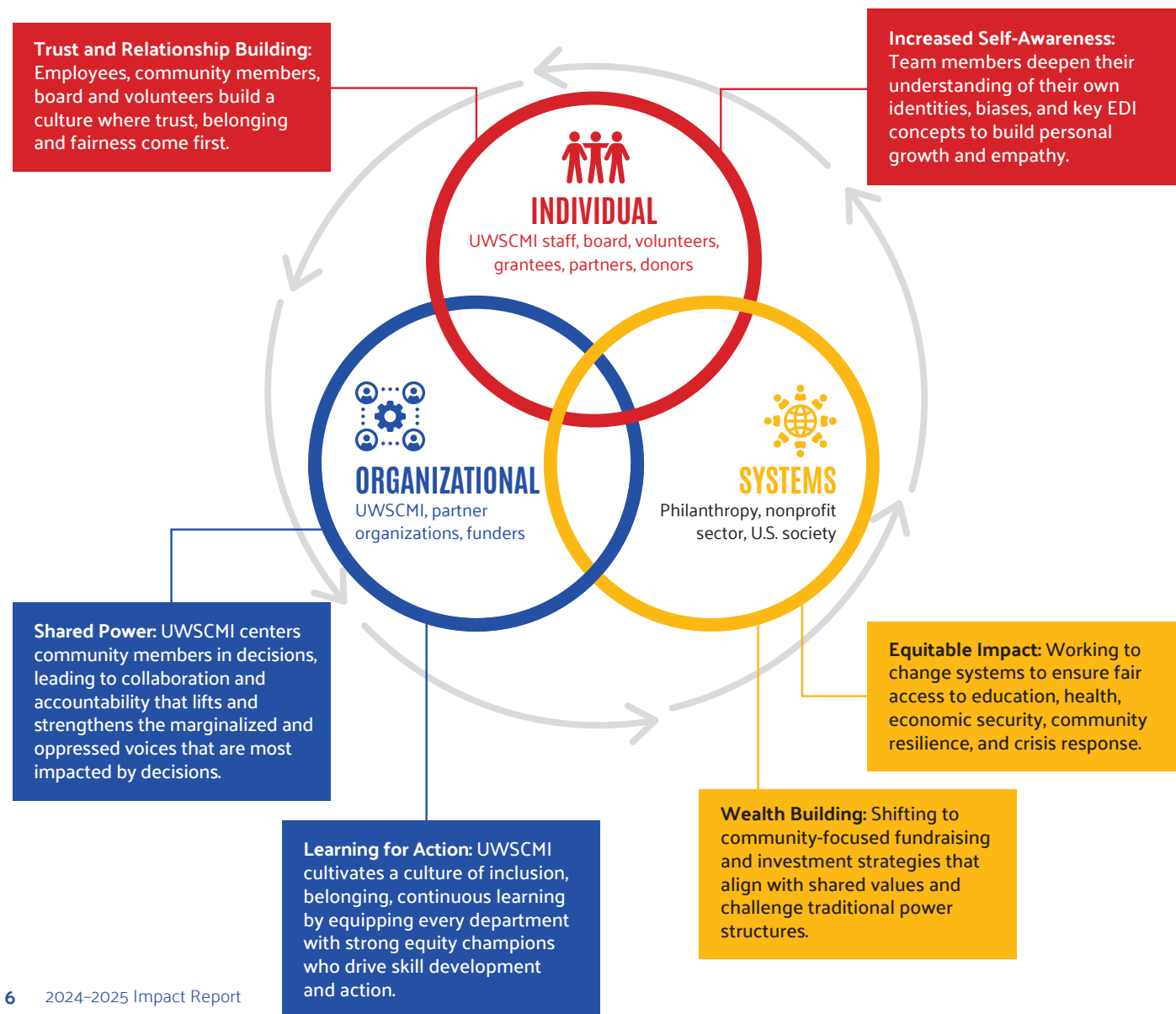
UWSCMI recognizes the richness and resilience within communities facing deeply embedded injustice. Our commitment to ALICE households compels us to focus on equity so that every person can access the resources they need to thrive.

What This Means

We respect and value the experiences and wisdom of people who have faced discrimination and harm, including BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color), members of the LGBTQIA+ community, people with disabilities, youth, and elders.

We celebrate the diversity of people, cultures and backgrounds that make our communities vibrant. We lift their voices and strengths, especially those affected by injustice, so that everyone has a place at the table. From wealth inequality to lack of access, we strive to change systems and break down barriers that keep people from succeeding.

In doing this critical work, we collectively pave the way for a better future for everyone.



ADVOCATING FOR ALICE

Beyond meeting urgent needs, UWSCMI addresses the root causes of social needs through advocacy. We promote equitable public policies and actions that remove barriers and improve access to housing, education, child care, and economic opportunity.

Our advocacy efforts are informed by our work in community, and rooted in ALICE data. By lifting up community voices and working alongside partners and policymakers, we help shape systems that work better for everyone—especially those who are most often left behind.

Areas of Advocacy



SAFETY NET

Accessing Transitional and Stable Housing

- Homelessness prevention and eviction diversion
- Expanding access to affordable rentals and subsidies
- Supportive services (mental health, job training) integrated with housing assistance

Ensuring Basic Needs Provision and Healthcare

- Increase access to basic needs such as food and utility assistance
- Affordable, accessible, culturally competent healthcare (physical, mental, dental)

Expanding Education Opportunities

- Education completion
- Supports to attend and complete degrees and credentials
- Workforce education
- Increase affordability of child care options



FINANCIAL STABILITY

Addressing Disparities and Fostering Inclusive Policies

- Anti-discrimination measures and diverse initiatives
- Language access and culturally competent services
- Equitable resource allocation, especially in underserved neighborhoods

Supporting Economic Mobility & Opportunity

- Financial stability to reinforce our existing capacity around our Program Assistance Center and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance programs
- Financial education
- Earned Income Tax Credit – federal and state
- Expansion of child tax credit
- Career coaching
- Mentorship



ALICE: STILL STRUGGLING

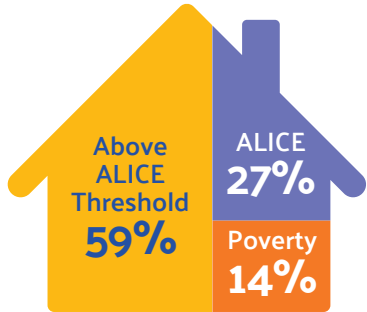
For more than a century, United Way has worked with partners of every kind to tackle the toughest social issues our communities face. While times change and issues evolve, financial hardship remains the common thread. ALICE households in our region are still struggling—and UWSCMI continues to lead efforts to help these working families. Learn more about the latest ALICE data at our website, unitedforscmi.org/alice.

ALICE in Our Region

27% of households in our six-county region are ALICE.

14% live below the Federal Poverty Level.

171,521 households live below the income threshold to afford basic essentials.



ALICE Survival & Stability Budgets in Our Region

Survival = Bare minimum cost of household basics (assumes affordable housing, health care, etc.)

Stability = Cost of household basics at a sustainable level, including savings

HOUSEHOLD	SURVIVAL	STABILITY
1 Adult		
Monthly Expenses	\$2,537	\$4,313
Annual Expenses	\$30,488	\$51,756
Full-Time Wage Needed	\$15.22/hour	\$25.88/hour
2 Adults/2 Children (childcare)		
Monthly Total Expenses	\$6,470	\$10,848
Annual Total Expenses	\$77,640	\$130,176
Full-time Wage Needed	\$38.82/hour	\$65.09/hour

Source: United For ALICE, 2025 ALICE Report (2023 data). These are averages across UWSCMI's six-county region; local budgets can vary significantly.

TERMS

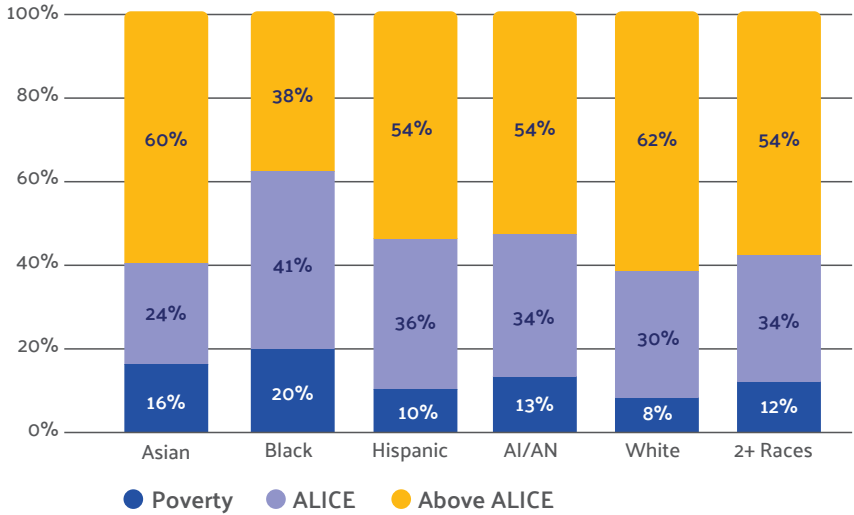
ALICE – Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed. Household income above the Federal Poverty Level but below the minimum needed for essentials.

Poverty – Household income below the Federal Poverty Level.

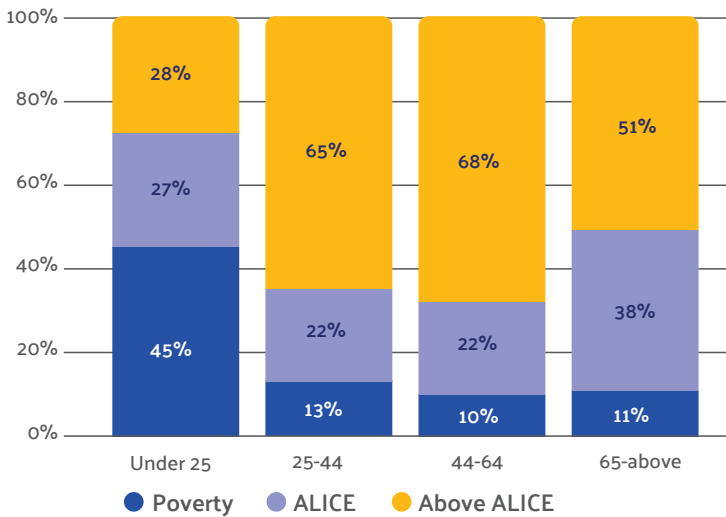
5 Occupations with Highest % Below ALICE Threshold

OCCUPATION	% BELOW AT	MEDIAN HOURLY WAGE
Cashiers	52%	\$15.47
Orderlies/Psychiatric Aides	52%	\$18.95
Personal Care Aides	47%	\$14.84
Cooks	46%	\$15.39
Waiters/Waitresses	41%	\$17.02

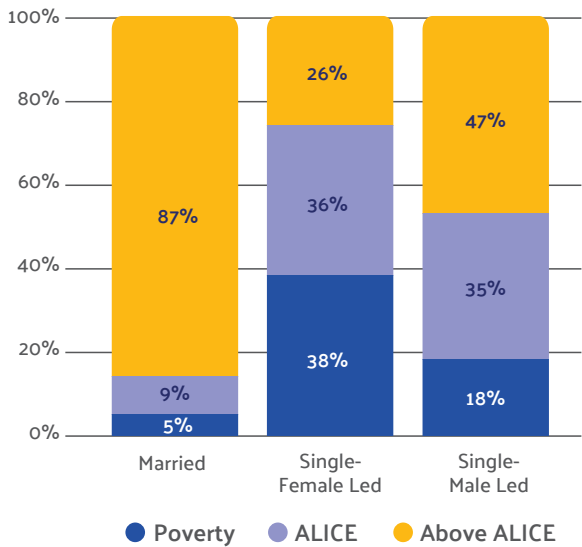
Households by Race/Ethnicity in Our Region



Households by Age in Our Region



Households by Family Type in Our Region





FUELING FINANCIAL HEALTH

VITA: Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

Our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program helps ALICE families keep more of their hard-earned dollars by providing free, high-quality tax preparation services to households making \$67,000 or less. VITA is an IRS program administered by partner organizations throughout the United States, and UWSCMI served eight counties last year – Clinton, Eaton, Gratiot, Ingham, Ionia, Kalamazoo, Montcalm and Shiawassee. In 2024, we launched our VITA mobile unit, serving partner locations across the Lansing area.



Visit vitataxprep.org to learn more.



MOVING FORWARD

After years of living without secure housing, Tara* came to a VITA site needing help filing her taxes. She hadn't filed in three years – not because she didn't want to, but because being homeless made it nearly impossible. "It took me years to get back on my feet," she said. Though she was skeptical at first, she said, "Because it was United Way, I felt comfortable." With the help of our certified volunteers, she filed three years of tax returns. Part of her refund went toward paying off old debts. The rest? She used it as a down payment on a reliable car – a life-changing purchase. "I needed it. Now I can get to work and make it to appointments. I can keep my life moving forward."

**Name has been changed to protect privacy.*



4,588 households served
impacting 6,143 individuals



Federal returns \$4,073,286
State returns \$3,406,358
Tax preparation fees saved \$1,459,008



1 mobile tax prep vehicle
16 mobile locations
55 tax clinics



35 site locations
649 tax clinics



5,250 hours of
volunteer time
203 volunteers

Data from 2024 tax season



MAKING EDUCATION A REALITY

The Capital Area College Access Network (CapCAN) is a community collaborative focused on making sure every person in the Capital Area can be college- and career-ready, and can participate in and complete a postsecondary education.

Data from September 2024-May 2025



1,700 high school seniors received
postsecondary advising

2,200 postsecondary
applications submitted

58% of seniors completed FAFSA

49.4% of high school graduates
enroll in postsecondary education
within 6 months of graduation

PAC: POWERING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

The Program Assistance Center (PAC) provides households with direct energy assistance to pay heat and electric bills. Our PAC team offers a needs assessment to each client, connecting them with other non-energy services. PAC is part of the Michigan Energy Assistance Program with additional support from Consumers Energy and DTE. PAC serves the entire state of Michigan.



\$5,488,449
direct assistance total



6,603
Households served
including 4,874 receiving
self-sufficiency services

Virginia* recently lost her son and was caring for her young grandchildren. Grieving and navigating a new reality, even simple tasks like completing the Energy Security Plan felt daunting. Thanks to the accessibility PAC provides by offering in-person application support, a PAC staff member was able to entertain the children while Virginia got personal help with her application. She was ultimately enrolled, ensuring that she and her grandchildren received the assistance they needed.

**Name has been changed to protect privacy.*

Data from PAC fiscal year, October 2023-September 2024



UWSCMI leads the Continuum of Care (CoC) programs for Kalamazoo and Calhoun counties. We partner with member organizations to coordinate and find solutions to the gaps, inequities, and challenges to reducing homelessness. To strengthen that work, the Kalamazoo County CoC piloted a hiring initiative in 2024 to bring in eight paid community consultants with crucial expertise.



ANASTASIA MINOTT

“As someone who experienced homelessness for three years and saw other people experience homelessness during Covid and other crucial times, helping anyone in need is the best thing,” said Anastasia Minott, one of the new consultants, who also experienced foster care.

RentAble

RentAble provides one-time financial assistance to help individuals and families in Kalamazoo County overcome barriers to becoming or staying housed. Funds can be used for things like application fees, security deposit, rent increases, mortgage payments, or owed utility costs.

65 households served
\$97,282.15 distributed

Data from Jan 2024-December 2024



JobSTAR (Supporting Talent and Retention) helps Jackson County employers support their workers with needs that affect productivity and attendance. An onsite Success Coach provides confidential guidance, connecting workers to services and support. This results in a stronger workforce, financially stable families, higher productivity, and a more vibrant local economy.

“Our organization has experienced nothing but positive outcomes from the program. Within a challenging market, benefits like this program provide our staff a sense of security, which influences our purpose toward valuing our staff.” – Past participating employer

21 participating companies
744 employees served
1,385 referrals made

TOP 5 REFERRALS MADE:
Financial Assistance, **254**
Insurance/Medical, **194**
Housing/Foreclosure, **144**
Transportation, **124**
Government Navigation, **108**

Data from Oct. 1, 2023-Sept. 30, 2024



Volunteers prepare to participate in the Point-In-Time Count, an effort to determine how many people are unhoused in each community on a single night.

BOOSTING SMALL BUSINESS

Entrepreneurship builds strong communities where everyone has opportunities, resources and support to thrive. UWSCMI fuels that growth through our Kalamazoo Micro-Enterprise Grants, a partnership with the City of Kalamazoo. KMEG provides access to financial and capacity-building resources for small-business owners, particularly those who have faced funding barriers from historical disparities.

2024

Number of applications submitted: **217**

Total \$ distributed: **\$250,000**

TOTAL SINCE 2020

Businesses served: **600**

Total investment: **\$3,000,000**

RESPONDING TO CRISES

Meeting basic needs includes stepping up in times of crisis. Our Disaster Relief Fund proactively supports planning, response and recovery from natural or human-made emergencies. We coordinate with local government, response teams, volunteers and other nonprofits to identify gaps and deploy resources where they are needed most.

Tornado Response

In May 2024, we activated our fund in response to a tornado that touched down in Kalamazoo County, affecting hundreds of households and businesses. Our team, fueled by generous donations from community and in partnership with others, jumped into action.

Total UW distribution: \$460,000

12 grants to 8 nonprofit organizations
for short-term and long-term recovery needs

“Having access to these relief dollars was a HUGE asset to our organization. With these funds, we were able to meet the needs of the many residents whose lives were impacted by the tornado.”
– Nonprofit partner





COLLABORATION & CAPACITY BUILDING

United Way does what no other organization can do alone—because no one can do it alone.

“Working together is the only way to tackle tough, complex social issues,” said Chris Sargent, UWSCMI President & Executive Officer.

UWSCMI leads by gathering the right partners and resources. “When people struggle to access food benefits, health care coverage, or safe and stable housing, the collaborations we build spark new ideas, new approaches, and stronger, more effective action,” Sargent said.

Building those partnerships and abilities is a crucial skill United Way has been reinventing and reinvigorating for over a century—over and above the programs it operates and invests in. The result is real impact and lasting solutions.

CAPITAL AREA

UWSCMI has provided staff support to the Power of We Consortium, Ingham County’s Human Service Collaborative Council, for nearly 10 years. That support has included raising funds, conducting a community needs assessment, promoting the use of 2-1-1, and fostering collaboration across our three-county region to design and implement a Community Information Exchange (CIE).

Other Examples:

Participation on the Human Services Collaborative Councils for Eaton and Clinton counties

Co-leadership of the Capital Area Child Care Coalition

JACKSON COUNTY

UWSCMI staff serve on multiple workgroups with the Jackson Collaborative Network, including the Shared Measurement System workgroup focused on a Collaborative Community Assessment. The assessment is completed every three years to better understand community conditions, identify disparities and help develop plans to address issues.

KALAMAZOO/BATTLE CREEK

UWSCMI is a member of the Coordinating Council for Kalamazoo’s Blueprint for Peace initiative, a long-term and community-led strategy to address community violence through a public health lens. We supported this collective impact work directly by distributing \$1,538,043 in grant dollars to address urgent community violence intervention needs.

Other Examples:

Partnerships with Cradle Kalamazoo, Battle Creek and Kalamazoo funders groups, Region 8 Child Care Plan and more.

Across the region, UWSCMI:

Leads monthly Agency Directors meetings

Convenes and connects our funded partners to foster collaboration and partnerships on a wide range of issues.

STRONGER COMMUNITIES THROUGH LABOR



United Way and the labor movement have been partnering since 1942 to build stronger communities and make sure every person has the systems and support they need to succeed.

That is why UWSCMI works with roughly 40 labor unions in our region to ensure that we are providing the resources they need to thrive accordingly.

In our community, that partnership is evident everywhere, including the following programs and activities:

- Letter Carriers’ Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive
- Annual AFL-CIO Community Services School at Black Lake
- UCAN Classes- Union Community Activist Network
- Michigan Association of United Ways Fall Seminar
- 2-1-1 Information and Referral
- Support for ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed)
- Tri County Labor Agency for Human Services
- United Way Worldwide Labor Engagement
- Labor of Love Holiday Program
- Fair parking fundraiser
- Labor’s Thanksgiving Giving
- Labor Breakfast
- Dislocated Worker Program





GRANTMAKING IN ACTION



Our Collective Impact

\$4,022,629 in unrestricted investments across our region

JACKSON COUNTY

\$297,667 invested in 21 programs at 19 agencies



Nation Outside community event.

Example of Impact

For one local blended family of six, with one parent in school and the other working, quality child care was an expense that was out of reach. Then they connected with United Way partner Child Care Network.

“Child Care Network has been a tremendous help for me and my family. After receiving a scholarship, the financial stress of living on one income for a family household has decreased. Our home is now a two-income household. Ultimately, I want a better future for my family, and with the support of Child Care Network, I can see this future come to reality.”

BATTLE CREEK AND KALAMAZOO AREA

\$3,390,768 invested in 60 programs at 59 agencies



Catching the Dream Learning Center, serving Burmese families in Battle Creek, was able to boost capacity, increasing the number of teachers by 6, and the number of families served by 10 in the 23-24 school year. In a survey, 84.8% of families reported they were very satisfied with the program.

Example of Impact

KALAMAZOO

Milestone Senior Services increased the number of clients served in their Home Delivered Meals program from 20 to 78 during the grant year.

BATTLE CREEK

Dr. Tino Smith, CEO of Kingdom Builders Worldwide, shared the impact his organization experienced:

“United Way’s support empowers Kingdom Builders Worldwide to move forward with critical programs that serve our youth and families, including our feeding initiatives, before- and after-school care, and our full summer enrichment offerings. These programs are designed to nourish the body and mind while providing a safe and engaging space for young people to grow. The investment also helps us continue expanding our summer programming that empowers youth through technology, learning, and leadership opportunities right here in Battle Creek.”

CAPITAL AREA (CLINTON, EATON, INGHAM COUNTIES)

\$334,194 invested in 15 programs at 13 agencies



United Way’s Immediate Past President, Stephanie Slingerland, joined staff on a site visit and tour of the Refugee Development Center.

Example of Impact

A parent shared their gratitude for The Davies Project, a partner that provides free transportation to medical appointments for seriously ill children and pregnant women:

“You have all been amazing and so helpful. I’m going to miss every driver we had the privilege of meeting and those that we built a relationship with. Your work has had a profound and positive impact on my life. I plan on giving back to the community, by joining TDP as a volunteer driver when I have some time after my daughter’s medical appointments. To the drivers, staff, and everyone else on the team, thank you for your support and love.”



See our funded partners in each community.

Data from July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024



DARLENE HYBELS

INVESTING IN WHAT MATTERS MOST

Over nearly four decades in the financial services industry, Darlene Hybels has found much to appreciate about the financial services firm she calls her professional home.

A CFP® Professional and Senior Vice President of Investments at the Kalamazoo branch of Raymond James & Associates, Inc., Darlene points to the company’s service-first philosophy, the genuine care they show for their employees, and their generosity in communities across the globe. But it was the unwavering commitment to local impact that inspired her to become a longtime United Way supporter – and a Tocqueville Society member.

“They don’t just talk the talk,” she said, “they walk the talk. And it starts at the top.”

Following Raymond James’ acquisition of Roney & Co, LLC in 1999, a \$5,000 match for United Way donations was offered employee donations. Not wanting to leave dollars on the table that could help people in the community, she made her pledge and has been doing so ever since. Raymond James now matches donations of up to \$10,000.

“It’s very generous,” Darlene said. “To me, it’s a way to increase my gift. I never went without food or was unhoused, but I always wanted to give back because I’m very grateful for what I have.”

For more than 54 years, Raymond James has partnered with United Way to strengthen communities like ours, with employee donors like Darlene leading the way.



Download our
2025 Book of Leaders.



WITH DEEPEST THANKS TO OUR DONORS

GIVING OVERVIEW

Total dollars raised:
\$6,745,832

Total number of donors
(including new vs. returning):
8,914

New donors this year:
2,017

New dollars this year:
\$663,836

LEADERSHIP GIVING

Tocqueville Society donors
(# and total dollars):
45 • \$908,931

Leadership Circle donors
(# and total dollars):
862 • \$1,681,327

CORPORATE & WORKPLACE GIVING

of workplace campaigns run:
274

New workplace campaigns:
27

Workplace campaign donors
(total companies + total individuals):
8,566

Top 10 workplace campaign partners

- Bronson Healthcare
- Consumers Energy
- General Motors
- Greenleaf Trust
- Kellanova
- Schupan
- State of Michigan Employees Charitable Campaign
- Stryker
- WK Kellogg Co
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Campaign totals as of June 16, 2025

NO CHALLENGE IS TOO BIG FOR US TO TAKE ON WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER. UNITED IS THE WAY™

Give Back

Become a one-time or recurring donor, join our Leadership Circle or Tocqueville Society, make a planned legacy gift, or launch a workplace campaign.



Volunteer

Make a difference with a one-time volunteer opportunity, or make a longer-term commitment with us or one of our partners.



SOMETHING *Big* IS HAPPENING

UWSCMI is building an online community just for YOU

Be part of something new and exciting. Our online community is where local changemakers like you come together to connect, learn, and take action. Scan and sign up now to be among the first to join and help shape what comes next!





UNITED WAY
South Central Michigan



Calhoun County

34 W. Jackson St.
Suite 4B
Battle Creek, MI 49017

Clinton | Eaton | Ingham Counties

330 Marshall St.
Suite 203
Lansing, MI 48912

Jackson County

536 N. Jackson St.
Jackson, MI 49201

Kalamazoo County

709 S. Westnedge Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49007



UnitedForSCMI.org

