

UNITED WAY OF WEST CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI

STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-2026



**Presented to the
United Way of West Central Mississippi
Board of Directors
January 4, 2022**

Our Mission Statement:

To build a stronger, healthier community by bringing the human, financial and strategic resources necessary to deliver measurable improvements and solutions to the critical health and human services facing the communities we serve.

Our Vision Statement:

To be the connecting link by (or through) which volunteers, resources, and agencies are united to promote and enhance the quality of life in our communities for those who need help.

Our Diversity Statement:

United Way of West Central Mississippi fosters and promotes an inclusive environment that leverages the unique contributions of diverse individuals and organizations so that we can collectively and effectively create opportunities for a better life for all.

We focus on promoting an inclusive environment in every aspect of our business, where everyone respects and values the contributions of all people. The different backgrounds, experiences, abilities and perspectives of our community strengthen the quality of our work and the success of our organizations.

Diversity and inclusion are at the heart of what it means to LIVE UNITED.



LETTER FROM MICHELE CONNELLY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Since our founding in 1953, United Way of West Central Mississippi has proudly served our community, supporting programs and initiatives that strengthen our neighbors' health, education and financial stability, as well as provide them with valuable support services. But we not only serve our community; we serve *through* our community. Our community is our most powerful resource: we believe in the power of collaboration; that our partnerships give us the ability to extend our impact, affecting greater change that not only strengthens our community today but builds the foundation for a better tomorrow. These alliances ensure the success of our children, the integrity of our families and neighborhoods, and the dignity of our seniors. They give people a second chance to rebuild their lives after tragedies and natural disasters, empowering them to not only survive but thrive.

Our community has faced great challenges in the past two years. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected almost every aspect of our daily lives, leaving us to navigate a new normal of ever-evolving protocol and practices to protect our neighbors, family, and friends. To say it's been frustrating—not to mention frightening—would be an understatement. But it also served as a testament to our resilience. It's reminded us just how strong our community is, and that when we stand together—when we LIVE UNITED—we can overcome any obstacle in our path.

This strategic plan outlines our goals for the next five years, incorporating both the commitment to excellence that has defined United Way of West Central Mississippi for the past seven decades as well as the innovation and adaptability that's become the signature of the 2020s. At its very core, this is a plan for and of our community, reminding us of the power we have when we LIVE UNITED.

Sincerely,

Michele Connelly
Executive Director
United Way of West Central Mississippi



COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMUNITY

- To have a deep understanding of community needs and to address those needs through programs and initiatives that create lasting, positive changes
- To steward community investments and grants in an effective, efficient, and transparent manner
- To work collaboratively with public and private entities and community organizations
- To report regularly to the community





OUR CORE VALUES

ACCOUNTABILITY:

To be accountable, honorable, and transparent

INTEGRITY:

To demonstrate integrity to our donors, those we serve, and the community as a whole

COLLABORATION:

To engage all segments of our community

INNOVATION:

To create and support sustainable change in education, financial stability, and health while continuing to address urgent needs and basic human care





WHERE WE STAND

STRENGTHS:

- Good reputation in local community
- Strong network of supporters
- Coordination and collaboration of disaster relief

WEAKNESSES:

- Evolving to meet COVID-19 protocols
- Reduction in workforce and business closures
- Community needs outweigh funding

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Expand digital communication and giving opportunities
- Create and strengthen relationships with individual donors
- Engage supporters with more volunteer opportunities

THREATS:

- Decrease in campaign giving
- National and economic conditions
- Lack of awareness





EDUCATION AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

EDUCATION:

Goal: Support our community's future by helping students reach their full potential

Target Issues:

- **Kindergarten Readiness:** Encourage early literacy development, build kindergarten readiness skills, and work to ensure every student starts school ready to learn
- **Grade-Appropriate Reading Levels:** Increase the number of children reading proficiently by the end of 8th grade through literacy programs both in elementary and middle school.

FINANCIAL STABILITY:

Goal: Promote financial stability and independence for all members of our community

Target Issues:

- **Awareness and Understanding:** Better utilize data through reports such as the Mississippi ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) Financial Hardship Report
- **Establish and Strengthen Networks:** Collaborate with existing coalitions and create new networks to fill the gap through programs that support workforce development, financial products, and financial empowerment and education
- **Expanded Funding:** Actively seek out and secure funding to support financial stability programs and initiatives



HEALTH

HEALTH:

Goal: Educate community members on the importance of good health and connect them with programs that support basic health and human services

Target Issues:

- **Access to Healthcare:** Support programs and initiatives that provide healthcare to those lacking access to sufficient coverage
- **Prevention, Management, and Treatment:** Educate individuals about opportunities that encourage optimal physical, mental, developmental, emotional, and social health
- **Safe and Independent Living:** Help seniors, disabled individuals, and others experiencing health issues to maintain safe, independent living or improve their quality of life



SUPPORT SERVICES

SUPPORT SERVICES:

Goal: Support and provide access to basic human needs to all members of our community

Target Issues:

- **Supplemental Nutrition and Feeding:** Make nutritious food available to support the health and well-being of those experiencing food insecurity
- **Disaster Preparedness and Relief:** Partner with disaster relief organizations and local emergency planners to develop action and recovery plans and assist in providing for unmet needs
- **Shelter and Support for Domestic Violence Survivors:** Support initiatives and programs that provide safe housing and basic needs for survivors of domestic violence
- **Homelessness Support and Prevention Services:** Aid individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless by examining trends and supporting prevention services



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE ONE:

Achieve Community Impact

- Improve lives and make measurable changes in community conditions on specific target issues in the areas of Education, Financial Stability, Health, and Support Services

OBJECTIVE TWO:

Develop Resources

- Sustain or improve the annual campaign in order to maintain or increase funding for programs that support United Way of West Central Mississippi's target issues

OBJECTIVE THREE:

Build Community Awareness and Understanding

- Engage the community in United Way's work by strengthening the brand through effective communication

OBJECTIVE FOUR:

Achieve Operational Excellence

- Enhance and incorporate ongoing strategies to support community impact objectives, maintain reputation for accountability and efficiency, and ensure leadership development.



OBJECTIVE ONE: ACHIEVE COMMUNITY IMPACT

OBJECTIVE ONE:

Achieve Community Impact

- Improve lives and make measurable changes in community conditions on specific target issues in the areas of Education, Financial Stability, Health, and Support Services

Initiatives:

- Collect statistics and narratives that measure effectiveness, efficiency, and customer satisfaction to better market the opportunities and overall accomplishments toward achieving the desired community impact
- Better utilize data from United Way direct services and community partners to develop large and attainable goals for policy changes and/or system changes in each of our focus areas
- Increase dialogue between United Way, our partners, and our community, along with increasing awareness of our community's needs, successes, and challenges
- Coordinate with and create coalitions that support and impact long-term change in our community



OBJECTIVE TWO: DEVELOP RESOURCES

OBJECTIVE TWO:

Develop Resources

- Sustain or improve the annual campaign in order to maintain or increase funding for programs that support United Way of West Central Mississippi's target issues

Initiatives:

- Develop a concrete and attainable goal to sustain Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) donations
- Build and maintain lasting relationships with new and current businesses and business leaders
- Incorporate new platforms of giving and engagement through digital events and giving opportunities





OBJECTIVE THREE: BUILD COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING

OBJECTIVE THREE:

Build Community Awareness and Understanding

- Engage the community in United Way's work by strengthening the brand through effective communication

Initiatives:

- Continue to utilize and improve donor engagement through traditional, online, and in-person marketing as well as in-person and virtual events
- Empower campaign coordinators to create individualized marketing plans for workplace campaigns designed to achieve awareness and understanding of the United Way vision, mission, and initiatives
- Strengthen United Way's position as a community impact leader and convener achieving results in education, financial stability, and health through targeted communication and advocacy
- Utilize diverse media to effectively communicate United Way's position as a community impact leader and convener achieving measurable results in education, financial stability, and health



OBJECTIVE FOUR: ACHIEVE OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

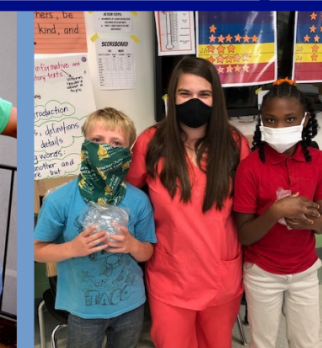
OBJECTIVE FOUR:

Achieve Operational Excellence

- Enhance and incorporate ongoing strategies to support community impact objectives, maintain reputation for accountability and efficiency, and ensure leadership development.

Initiatives:

- Encourage board engagement by actively engaging and educating members in the work of the organization
- Increase and invest in staff training and development
- Maintain and improve the office space and technology to reflect the mission and vision of United Way of West Central Mississippi.





CLOSING THOUGHTS

For seven decades, United Way of West Central Mississippi has had the privilege of bringing people together to enact great change for the betterment of our community. It is humbling to imagine the innumerable individuals impacted by our work—or more accurately, *your work*.

It is difficult to imagine what the next five years will bring, but one thing is certain: we will **LIVE UNITED.**

