

2024 COMMUNITY IMPACT ANNUAL REPORT



UNITED WAY
North Central Iowa

When We Come Together, Our Community Is Stronger

North Central Iowa is a caring place, full of people who look out for one another. But many families in our community are facing real challenges. Even when people are working, it can be difficult to afford food, housing, childcare, or healthcare. One unexpected bill can quickly create stress or crisis.

These are our neighbors, friends, and coworkers—and helping them is why United Way exists. No one organization can solve these challenges alone. Real change happens when people work together. United Way of North Central Iowa brings together donors, volunteers, businesses, nonprofits, and community leaders across our eight-county region to help families and strengthen communities. The impact shared in this report shows what is possible when we come together with a shared purpose.

I am deeply thankful for everyone who supports United Way. Your generosity, time, and care make a difference for local families every single day. This report celebrates what we have done together—and reminds us that when we support one another, North Central Iowa is stronger.



Jen Arends

CEO, United Way of North Central Iowa

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Challenges Facing North Central Iowa

Behind Every Number is a Family Doing Their Best



25.65% of households are ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed)



An additional **11.05%** north Iowans live in poverty



24.9% of 3rd Graders in North Iowa are not reading at grade level



16.36% of children are food insecure



17.05% of households in our region are housing burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing

UWNCI By the Numbers

26,279
People Served

19
Partner
Programs
Funded

1 Volunteers
9 Engaged
2 A row of stylized hands in various colors (blue, yellow, red, pink) holding small hearts.

1,465 Children enrolled in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library

289 A cartoon illustration of a girl in a pink coat and a boy in a blue coat standing together.

Coats Distributed

1,245 A cartoon illustration of a pair of purple and white athletic shoes.

Athletic Shoes Provided

United Way's Focus on Community Impact

EDUCATION

Helping Kids Soar at Every Age

United Way supports children and youth from early learning through graduation and into careers. By investing in early childhood, literacy, mentoring, and career exploration, we help young people build the foundation they need to succeed.

Funded Programs Supporting Education

- RSVP – Reading Buddies: One-on-one literacy support for elementary students
- IJAG – Driving Youth Success in Education and Careers: Career exploration, leadership, and workforce readiness
- Mason City Youth Task Force – One-on-One Mentoring: Mentoring relationships that build confidence and belonging
- Lutheran Services of Iowa – Early Childhood Programming: Home visiting and early childhood development support
- Charlie Brown Community Day Care – Child Care Assistance: Bridging child care gaps so parents can work
- Dolly Parton Imagination Library



Impact Story: Reading Buddies

A third-grade student shared this note with her volunteer:

"You helped me with big words I didn't know. I passed my fluency goal because of you. I feel so accomplished. I made a new friend—and that is you."

Education Program Outcomes

- 97.9% of children improved grades or reading skills
- 640 youth reported feeling cared about in their community
- 98.5% increased awareness of career pathways

United Way's Focus on Community Impact

HEALTH

Promoting Safety, Wellness, and Access to Care

Health is about more than medical visits. It includes safety, access to nutritious food, transportation, and supportive relationships. United Way invests in programs that meet immediate needs while improving long-term wellbeing.

Funded Programs Supporting Health

- Community Kitchen – Nutritional Meals for Those in Need
- Meals on Wheels – Meals for the Homebound
- Elderbridge Agency on Aging – Nutrition Program
- Food Bank of Iowa – Fighting Childhood Hunger
- Crisis Intervention Services – Violence Intervention & Prevention Programs
- YMCA – Scholarship Program



Impact Story: Meals on Wheels

When a volunteer couldn't reach a homebound client during delivery, staff followed up immediately. That call led to the discovery that the client had fallen and needed medical care. He recovered—and his family later shared how grateful they were that someone noticed. For many seniors, the daily check-in is just as important as the meal.

Health Program Outcomes

- 96.9% of clients remained free from abuse or neglect
- 95.7% were successfully connected to services
- 94.3% developed healthier relationships
- 97.8% gained access to healthcare supports
- 89.8% found safety during crisis

United Way's Focus on Community Impact

FINANCIAL STABILITY & HOUSING

Building Security for Today—and the Future

Everyone deserves the opportunity to earn a living, maintain stable housing, and build security for the future. United Way supports job readiness, housing stability, legal assistance, and emergency support to help families move forward.

Funded Programs Supporting Financial Stability & Housing

- 43 North Iowa – Community Connections & Transitional Living Support
- Catholic Charities – Jail & Prison Reentry Services
- Friends of the Family – Rapid Rehousing Initiative
- Northern Lights Alliance for the Homeless – Homelessness to Permanent Housing
- NICAQ – Outreach Program
- NIACOG Housing Trust Fund
- Iowa Legal Aid – Financial Stability Project
- North Iowa Child Abuse Prevention Council – Satellite Child Protection Center



Impact Story: Catholic Charities

Referred through drug court, Justin earned his GED, completed leadership training, and secured a management position. He paid off more than \$3,500 in fines, regained joint custody of his children, and is working toward buying his first home. This is what coordinated support—and belief in someone's potential—can achieve.

Financial Program Outcomes

- 100% of clients had immediate needs met
- 437 individuals accessed emergency financial assistance
- 96.1% remained in or transitioned to stable housing
- 91.1% maintained a household budget
- 72.7% retained employment
- 91.8% resolved civil or legal issues

United Way's Focus on Community Impact: Donor Designation Program

United Way's Donor Designation program lets donors choose where their gift goes and how it helps people in North Iowa. This choice allows donations to support local programs and nonprofits that provide food, education, housing, and mental health services. By honoring donor choice and generosity, United Way helps keep resources in our communities and creates lasting change for families across North Iowa.



\$67,641.74 Raised through the Donor Designation Program

2024-25 Donor Designated Agencies

- 43 North Iowa
- Algona Senior Center
- Amy's Food Pantry
- Boy Scouts Twin Valley
- Bridges Mentoring
- Britt Area Foodbank
- Caring Pregnancy Center
- Catholic Charities
- Cedar Valley Friends of the Family
- Charles City Community Fund
- Charlie Brown Preschool & Childcare
- Community Kitchen
- Compassionate Friend
- Crisis Intervention
- Elma Early Childhood Center
- Emmet County VFW
- Emmetsburg Catholic School
- Estherville Public Library
- Fairmont Area Kinship
- Floyd County Fair Society
- Floyd County Humane Society
- Forces With Fire
- Forest City Library
- Girl Scouts of Minnesota & Wisconsin
- Hawkeye Harvest Food Bank
- Heaven's Table Food Shelf
- Hospice
- House of Compassion in Marshalltown
- Humane Society of North Iowa
- Iowa Legal Aid
- Iowa State University Extension and Outreach – Emmet County
- Iowa State University Extension and Outreach – Hancock County
- Kossuth Care Team
- Kossuth County Food Pantry
- Lake Mills Preschool and Childcare
- Life Connections
- LSI of Iowa
- Lutheran Social Service Senior Nutrition
- Martin County 4-H
- Martin County Youth for Christ
- Meals on Wheels
- Mile High United Way
- My Happy Haven
- NIACOG
- North Iowa Betterment
- North Iowa Community Action
- North Iowa Community School District
- Northeast Iowa Foodbank
- One on One Mentoring
- One Vision
- Options Pregnancy Center
- Osage Firefighters
- Osage Public Library
- Prairie Ridge
- Redeemer Preschool & Daycare
- Ronald McDonald House
- Salvation Army
- Salvation Army Southern Minnesota
- Seasons Center for Behavioral Health
- STEP Martin–Fairbault
- TLC
- Toys for Tots
- United Way of Lee, Hendry, and Glades Counties
- United Way of Story County
- Watonwan County Humane Society
- Watonwan County Library
- Winnebago County Neighborhood Food Bank
- YMCA Charles City
- YMCA Forest City

Current Financial Status FY 2024/25

