

2021 Community Impact Investment Report

PREPARED BY JEN
ARENDS, CEO

UNITED WAY OF NORTH
CENTRAL IOWA





United Way of
North Central Iowa



FUNDING IMPACT



MISSION

Connect and strengthen community resources to inspire change in the lives of all north Iowans.

VISION

Connecting People. Impacting Lives.
Strengthening Communities.

OUR COMMUNITY GOAL

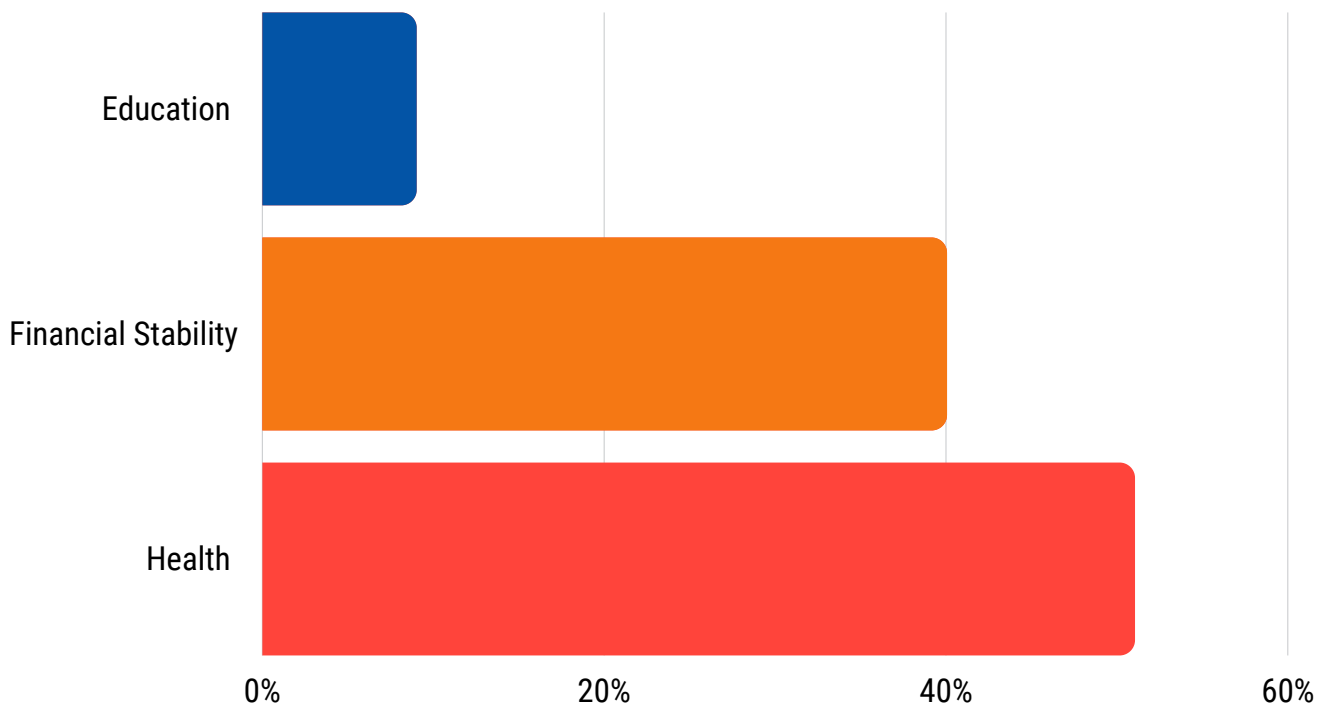
A connected caring community where we are engaged and aware, working for and with others to help build sustainable life for all.

United Way Community Impact-Funding Change in North Iowa

United Way is focused on critical needs in education, financial stability and health for north Iowa families. We provide foundational support to high performing nonprofit programs that have proven solutions in providing north Iowa families the resources they need to achieve a stable and healthy life. We examine local data, partner reports, state trends and issue research to ensure that donor dollars are invested in high performing nonprofit programs that have the greatest impact on those in need.

This year, 31 programs requested \$513,470.05 in program support. Community Impact Teams, made up of community volunteers from across our eight county region, review applications and hear agency presentations. This year, volunteers spent 400 volunteer hours to allocate \$280,000 to area programs. Seventeen nonprofit programs were awarded funding for the 2021-22 Community Impact Grant Cycle. Community Impact recipients provide much needed programming across our region, each doing their part to ensure a future of hope to those in need. This year, COVID-19 weighed heavily on impact decisions, with a higher focus on health, safety, financial stability, and meeting basic needs.

Investment by Impact Area



According to the Independent Sector, the current estimated national value of each volunteer hour is \$27.20. Community Impact Volunteers donated a value of **\$10,880** worth of time to help United Way allocate donor dollars.

\$29,500 Invested in Education Programming for North Iowa



Education Focus: Childhood success. We envision children entering school ready to succeed.

Investment Priorities:

- Programs to increase protection of at-risk children and to help children establish and maintain high-quality social relationships
- Support parent skills to help foster early learning environments that nurture and stimulate growth to ensure children are ready to enter kindergarten.
- Reading programs to address challenges to reading on grade level through third grade.



Education Focus: Youth Success. We envision youth that achieve key milestones, experiencing successful transitions from elementary to middle and high school; on-time graduation, and completion of some form of post-secondary education, credentialing, or training.

Investment Priorities:

- Instructional support/development for academically focused programs for targeted populations reading below grade level or at risk of academic failure
- Programs to increase protection of at-risk children and to establish and maintain high-quality social relationships.
- Support the parent skills that foster successful transitions from middle school to young adult.
- Efforts targeted at chronically absent or academically struggling students to help them and their families to identify and address contributing factors.

Education Success



IJAG

Rainna's father passed away when she was in elementary school, and her mother was unable to care for her, so she began living with her grandmother. The changes in her life caused anxiety so severe she was unable to attend middle school, and when she started high school she was unable to keep up with her classes. She joined iJAG and found the support she needed to become comfortable in school and soon began excelling in her classes. She had so much success in iJAG her freshman and sophomore years that she took the role of teacher aid during her junior year and began mentoring younger students. Now in her senior year, Rainna has a 3.91 GPA, has begun taking college courses, and continues to serve as a teacher aid in iJAG.

Education Funded Programs

IJAG (Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates)-Empowering, Engaging, and Educating Mason City: \$11,500

IJAG believes people are more powerful than circumstances. iJAG helps Mason City youth tap into that power to change the trajectory of their lives. We provide mentoring, academic tutoring, job training/placement for low-income students; activities which raise graduation rates, help students access living-wage employment, and establish long-term self-sufficiency. iJAG provides an evidence-based, comprehensive school-to-career program for students who face multiple barriers to success.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo

Bridges Mentoring: \$9,000

Bridges Mentoring works to continue to spread the magic of mentoring. Each individual mentoring match meet once a week for a minimum of one hour. Program participants, both young and old, share their values and personal goals in a mutually respectful, supportive way which leads to a more enriched life for both. Matches break down barriers and create opportunities for success. Youth need caring and consistent relationships with adults in order to navigate their way through adolescence and beyond.

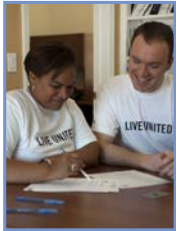
Counties Served: Mitchell

RSVP-Reading Buddies: \$9,000

The Reading Buddy program is an elementary school literacy program that addresses the needs of developing readers. Multiple volunteers meet with students on different days of the week, so each student receives approximately 30-60 minutes of extra reading per week. Volunteers help students with letter and sight word identification, pronunciation, as well as fluency and comprehension skills. This one-on-one, extra attention helps improve the student's reading skills and attitude towards reading.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo, Franklin, Hancock, Winnebago and Worth

\$112,500 Invested in Financial Stability Programming for North Iowa



Financial Stability Focus: We envision a community where individuals and families improve their socioeconomic status.

Investment Priorities:

- Access to programs that help families meet basic needs, such as eliminating food insecurity, shelter and housing supports, and services for vulnerable populations with housing barriers; increase housing stability, self-sufficiency, and independent living.
- Job programs designed to provide access to a full range of services to prepare, train, place and/or retain individuals seeking family sustaining employment.
- Adult education programs that provide or work in conjunction with job readiness.
- Programs providing low-income consumer assistance with legal/mediation services related to financial barriers.
- Programs providing comprehensive financial education to low-income families including family financial planning as well as access to income supports and mainstream financial products and services.

30% of north lowans fall below the ALICE Threshold.

WHO IS ALICE?

ASSET LIMITED



ALICE has no safety net in times of crisis

INCOME CONSTRAINED



ALICE's income falls short of essentials

EMPLOYED



ALICE is working, yet not earning enough

Financial Stability Success



Friends of the Family

Connie was referred to FOF after fleeing an abusive relationship. With the support of her Housing Support Specialist (HSS), Connie was able to secure safe and stable housing and be connected to community resources. Connie received case management services that included being connected with mental health counseling services, assistance in setting up reminders to make phone calls and schedule appointments, applying for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Section 8. Connie is hopeful for her future as she is working on filing for divorce from her abuser and continues to work on improving her mental health. She feels she has come a long way from being in and out of shelter to now being safe in her own home.

Financial Stability Funded Programs

43 North Iowa-Community Connections-\$17,500

Community Connections was created to fill service gaps for youth and young adults who need help to achieve appropriate, measurable, employment related goals based upon individual strengths and needs related to employment training, skill building and job placement activities. 43 North Iowa conducts soft skills training, work experiences, Project SEARCH internships, job seeking skill development, 1 x 1 job seeking and placement support with follow along services. Many young adults with disabilities and multiple social barriers need supported employment services. Supportive Employment is for persons with the most significant disabilities, who need intensive or ongoing job support, who have traditionally been excluded from competitive work settings, or whose work has been interrupted or intermittent because of their disabilities.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago and Worth

43 North Iowa-Transitional Living Supports - \$5,000

Transitional Living Services ensures clients meet their medical, mental health and daily living needs in a variety of supported living settings. Staff assist clients in managing daily life by encouraging and providing opportunities for skill building, community engagement, assisting in connecting with natural supports, and navigating social situations. The goal for this program is to support individuals as they transition from one level of care to another where gaps and lags in funding occur. The transitional living program exists to help people with severe and pervasive mental illness step down from intensive services to the lower levels of support. Individuals have no income, and need help with clothes, personal items, and food, and are without resources for these essential items.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago and Worth

Financial Stability Funded Programs

Cedar Valley Friends of the Family-Rapid Rehousing Initiative: \$12,000

The Rapid Rehousing Initiative aims to end homelessness in North Central Iowa by providing rent and/or utility assistance and case management services that assists clients in finding/ securing affordable housing using the "Housing First" model. Giving clients the opportunity to meet their basic needs while building a support system and increasing their knowledge about personal finances and money management. Case management visits include budgeting, problem-solving, connecting to community resources, and more.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago and Worth

Charlie Brown Community Child Care and Preschool-Child Care Assistance for Low-Income Families: \$20,000

The Child Care Assistance for Low-income Families Program serves families who are struggling to pay for child care when trying to begin or maintain employment and need quality child care for their children. Currently, the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) requires a 30-45-day waiting period for anyone who is applying for their child care assistance (CCA) program. This makes it nearly impossible for someone who cannot afford child care to begin a new job.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Hancock, and Worth

Iowa Legal Aid-Financial Stability Project: \$10,000

The goal of the Financial Stability Project is to ensure low-income residents of north central Iowa have stable income to meet basic needs. We preserve income and assets, reduce debt, and increase income. Our legal assistance includes advice, negotiation with third parties, legal research, and representation before agencies and courts. When there are insufficient resources to provide service, we refer some clients to private attorneys who provide their services free of charge through our Volunteer Lawyers Project.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago and Worth

Financial Stability Funded Programs

NIACOG-Housing Trust Fund: \$23,000

The Housing Trust Fund assists low income households who are primarily elderly and/or disabled, with emergency home repairs. Typical projects include: furnace repair/replacement, handicapped ramps, resolving electrical issues, repair/replacement of water heater, and making bathroom accessibility alterations. Funds may be partnered with other programs when available to address as much need as possible.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago and Worth

North Iowa Community Action Organization-Outreach Program: \$25,000

The North Iowa Community Action Organization's Outreach Program assists families in obtaining and maintaining affordable housing through education. Case managers help families set goals to improve their socioeconomic status. Case Managers assist families in creating a working budget and educates families regarding their banking needs, and if families are unbanked they will guide them. Families may receive emergency rental assistance to help overcome pressing crises while case workers work with the families to build an emergency fund to avoid future crises.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago and Worth

\$142,000 Invested in Health and Safety Programming for North Iowa



Health Focus: We envision a region where individuals and families have access to healthcare and improve their health.

Investment Priorities:

- Community education and intervention to prevent violence and raise awareness of the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Programs designed to aid and assist victims of violence, sexual assault, and abuse to promote safe outcomes.
- Community-based wellness programs that promote health through preventative measures.
- Patient centered models of health care delivery that meet the complex needs of a diverse population.
- Support for healthy families in the home and in the community.

**13.8% of
north Iowan
adults have
4+ ACE's**

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic incidents that can dramatically upset a child's sense of safety and well-being. The more adversity someone experienced as a child, the more likely they are to suffer from depression, smoke, have heart disease, miss days at work due to poor health, or face many other challenges in adulthood.

Health Success



Community Kitchen

A young woman in her late twenties shared with us how important the meals were for her family. She had worked at a local store remodeling project, but when the project was finished she was unable to find work. She was also balancing a family with two small children. She shared that The Kitchen made a difference for her and her children by giving them a balanced meal when they were trying to stretch their finances. She continues to look for employment and thanks the volunteers each time she visits.

Health Funded Programs

Community Kitchen-Nutritional Meals for those in Need: \$21,000

The Community Kitchen works to meet the hunger needs in the North Iowa area. Located in Mason City the Kitchen provides a noon meal, six days a week, including Saturdays. They serve four evenings each week. Food and supplies are provided to Clear Lake, which serves evening meals on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at the United Methodist Church. The Kitchen has provided bread to individuals who stop in to the Mason City location and to the Clear Lake Food Bank. During the Covid-19 Crisis the Kitchen provided carry-out meals to those in need.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago and Worth

Crisis Intervention Service-Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention: \$4,000

Crisis Intervention Service provides a variety of evidence & research-based violence prevention & education programming for all age levels. Programming addresses individual, relational, community and societal levels. Prevention is the key to reducing abuse, but it takes time. The goal of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault prevention is to enable long-term sustainable social change.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago and Worth

Crisis Intervention Service-Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and other Violent Crimes Intervention Program. \$40,000

CIS provides a holistic approach, blending prevention, education, crisis response, supportive services, housing assistance, community organizing and collaborative partnerships to better meet the needs of victims of violence in North Central Iowa. The payoff for safe housing and crisis response is immediate and tangible. Crisis Intervention specialists work with the individual and/or family to develop a course of action and get people to a safe place to start again.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago and Worth

Health Funded Programs

YSS-Francis Lauer Youth Services-Emergency Services Shelter: \$30,000

YSS-Francis Lauer Youth Services operates a co-ed shelter for children primarily between the ages of 12 and 17. The Child Welfare Emergency Services (CWES) Shelter operates 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and is licensed through the state of Iowa Department of Human Services, Department of Inspections and Appeals. Youth served in Shelter are placed due to various concerns such as: health and safety issues, runaway behaviors, homelessness, mental health issues, substance abuse, difficulties at home or school, truancy, or delinquent behaviors. Shelter provides a safe and consistent place to stay while coordinating youth's physical, emotional, and behavioral health needs.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago and Worth

Friends of Iowa CASA and ICFCRB-North Iowa CASA: \$20,000

The North Iowa Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program recruits, trains and supports community volunteers who advocate for and promote the best interest of children who are victims of abuse and/or neglect. CASAs are appointed by a judge as officers of the court to provide focused, individualized advocacy for CINA-adjudicated children. CASAs submit a report to the court for each hearing involving the child, allowing the judge to make more informed decisions in the child's best interest.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, and Worth

Meals On Wheels-Meals for the Homebound: \$18,000

The Meals for the Homebound program provides nutritious meals to people with difficulty preparing meals for a variety of physical or mental conditions, including recovery from an illness or operation. Meals include a meat, vegetable, a starch, and a dessert and prepared under a dietitian's supervision at MercyOne Medical Center. Rotating meal plans ensure variety. Special dietary requirements can be accommodated. If it weren't for this program, some recipients would not be able to remain in their home and would have to move to a more expensive care facility.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo

North Iowa Child Abuse Prevention Council-Satellite Protection Center: \$9,000

The satellite Child Protection Center in North Central Iowa is to have partnerships with related agencies to provide a comprehensive, coordinated approach to an identified gap in child abuse investigation and intervention. This program provides access to an integrated system that addresses the need for investigation, examination, prosecution, advocacy, and mental health services for those served.

Counties Served: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Mitchell, Winnebago and Worth



**United Way
of North Central Iowa**