



HEALTH.



**SHE NEEDS  
HEALTH CARE.**

**WE NEED YOU.**

**LIVE UNITED<sup>®</sup>**

She's our future—if she lives past her first birthday. That's the heartbreak of infant mortality, especially among children of color or babies from low-income families. When you invest in our Health Impact Strategy, you help children and families in our region get the care and counsel they need, ensuring a lifetime of birthdays for every child and a future for all.

### **Invest.**

**\$1,450** secures one year of intensive mental health services and supports for a vulnerable family and infant.

**\$2,750** provides one family and their infant a year of in-home visits from a trained nurse.

**\$10,250** provides scholarships for anti-racism and self-advocacy training to 20 community members.

*(Kalamazoo only)*

### **Volunteer.**

Organize a diaper or formula drive to benefit local families in need. Assemble hand-made safe sleepers for new moms.



## Issue.

Babies of color or from low-income families are far more likely to die in their first year in our region.

- **Infant mortality for black babies in Kalamazoo County is four times higher than that of white babies.**
- **In the city of Battle Creek, black infants die at a rate 50% higher than do white babies.**
- **Babies born on Medicaid in our region are three times more likely to die than those who aren't.**

## Action.

United Way's goal is to improve family and infant health and reduce racial and economic disparities that impact health.

- **Our target: Improve infant mortality rates in families of color and low-income to 6.0 (deaths per 1,000 live births) by 2025.**
- **Our focus: 1) Physical, mental and behavioral health for families and infants; 2) Awareness, education and engagement.**

## Result.

A lower infant mortality rate and healthier birth outcomes have long-term effects for children and the community.

- **Birth weight above 5.5 pounds increases a child's chances to graduate high school by 33%, increases yearly earnings by 15%, and reduces long-term health issues.**
- **Healthier babies mean less pressure on the health care system, less absenteeism by parents, and a healthier, more productive population.**

# CHANGE THE STORY

**United Way of the Battle Creek  
and Kalamazoo Region**

[changethestory.org](http://changethestory.org)





INCOME. 

**HE NEEDS WORK.**

**WE NEED YOU.**

**LIVE UNITED<sup>®</sup>**

One small crisis, one unexpected bill, and he's out of money. Out of work. Out of hope. When you invest in our Income Impact Strategy, you restore hope. You help people find the supports they need to get back on their feet. Your compassion means long-term success for them and for our region.

### **Invest.**

**\$1,800** will support 1 youth in a 6-week paid summer work experience/work readiness training program.

**\$6,000** will keep up to 8 families in their homes by paying off past due rent to prevent court ordered eviction.

**\$5,750** will provide transportation assistance to 100 young people for up to one year while finishing their GED certification and/or involvement in a job training program.

**\$25,000** will fully weatherize 3 to 6 low-income, non-energy efficient households annually.

**\$50,000** would annually replace furnaces in up to 20 low-income homes, creating a cost saving for the residents.

### **Volunteer.**

Train to provide assistance with free tax preparation for low income individuals. Assist in serving as a financial literacy coach/instructor in free financial classes.



## Issue.

More than one in three households in our region are in poverty or struggling to make ends meet.

- **62% of new jobs in Michigan pay less than needed to meet a survival budget.**
- **Unemployment for blacks and Hispanics is up to double that of whites in our region.**
- **Over the past decade, household expenses rose faster than inflation.**

## Action.

United Way's goal is to increase the number of economically stable households.

- **Our target: Transition 8,500 households in the region to economic stability by 2025.**
- **Our focus: 1) Affordable and stable housing; 2) Workforce and income supports for low-income and working families.**

## Result.

Economically stable households and affordable housing improve employment, student success and health for the region.

- **Every dollar invested in a family's household stability saves \$2.44 in temporary shelter and \$5.37 in transitional housing.**
- **Annual income above the survival threshold reduces a family's financial hardship and risk factors such as inadequate food or health care.**

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A photograph of a woman with dark hair hugging a young girl with dark hair from behind. The woman is looking down at the girl. The background is dark and textured.

**BASIC NEEDS.** 

**SHE NEEDS HELP.**

**WE NEED YOU.**

**LIVE UNITED<sup>®</sup>**

Everyone wants a better life. But without a safety net, individuals and families who have little income can't move past the crises of today. When you invest in our Basic Needs Impact Strategy, you provide crucial services that help people move beyond barriers to realize their full potential.

### **Invest.**

**\$1,000** provides 375 served meals and \$1500 provides 100 nights of shelter for the homeless.

**\$5,000** keeps the utilities on for 342 households that are facing disconnection or 465 articles of winter clothing for those in need.

**\$12,500** provides 427 people with services for obtaining the identification needed to qualify for many programs.

**\$50,000** provides over 1100 hours of services for those whose mental health is a barrier to obtaining needed resources.

### **Volunteer.**

Help prepare and serve food to those in need. Join other volunteers in light landscaping and cleaning projects.



### Issue.

People in poverty, near poverty or homeless are often trapped in their situation and can't get ahead.

- **15% of households in our region are in poverty.**
- **The top 5 calls to 2-1-1 are for basic needs and services.**
- **Unmet basic needs have long-term negative effects on a person's education, income and health.**

### Action.

United Way's goal is to ensure a safety net in place for people in times of need.

- **Our target: Support that provides consistent basic needs and services to those who need them.**
- **Our focus: Engage with diverse groups all people have access to basic needs to help them overcome obstacles.**

### Result.

Sustaining a safety net helps people move from crisis to a more financially stable situation.

- **In moving toward greater stability, people reduce their need for future assistance.**
- **Addressing homelessness and basic needs helps restore a person's ability to succeed and contribute to the community.**

## CHANGE THE STORY

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EDUCATION.



**HE NEEDS TO READ.**

**WE NEED YOU.**

**LIVE UNITED<sup>®</sup>**

When he learns, he succeeds for a lifetime. It begins with a healthy family life, quality preschool, early grade literacy, and support for social and emotional well-being. When you invest in our Education Impact Strategy, you invest in our most precious resource: our children. And our future.

### **Invest.**

**\$1,200** provides leveled books for one classroom library.

**\$2,000** provides curriculum for a preschool classroom to increase child vocabulary and language.

**\$6,000** provides one child with a one year scholarship for high-quality childcare.

**\$10,000** provides training for up to 75 staff and educators about how to support children with high social emotional needs.

**\$45,000** provides a local school a full time reading specialist to provide high needs students with one-on-one support.

### **Volunteer.**

Be a Reading Buddy! As a buddy, you'll work with your K-3 student for 30 minutes per week during any weekday at an elementary school within Battle Creek, Lakeview, Galesburg-Augusta, or Comstock.



## Issue.

In our region, there are big disparities in graduation rates for students of color and low-income.

- **64.5% of black students graduate from high school, compared to 81.5% of white students.**
- **66% of low-income students graduate, compared to 86% for more financially stable students.**
- **Students who don't read proficiently by 4th grade are four times less likely to graduate.**

## Action.

United Way's goal is to improve high school graduation rates and reduce racial and economic disparities in these rates.

- **Our target: Improve the regional four-year graduation rate to 83% by 2030.**
- **Our focus: Invest resources strategically in early education to improve graduation rates over time.**

## Result.

Early childhood interventions lead to better graduation rates and long-term economic growth.

- **Well-designed early education programs generate a return of \$1.80-\$17.07 for every dollar spent.**
- **Decreased dropout rates lead to increased earnings, more consumer spending, greater investment and increased tax revenue.**

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