



United Way
of Central Iowa

COMMUNITY REPORT

2022



ESSENTIAL NEEDS

Central Iowans need not only to meet their most basic needs of food and shelter, but access to quality, nutritious food, and a safe place to call home.

HOUSING

1 in 4 central Iowans are “housing burdened,” spending more than 30% of their income on housing, impacting their ability to afford healthy food, quality childcare, and the opportunity to build wealth.

For Black central Iowans, this number increases to 1 in 2 households.

1 in 4

central Iowa households are “housing burdened,” spending at least 30% of their income on housing.

2:1:1

IOWA
received more than
105,000+
contacts in
2021.

30%

fewer childcare
providers are in central
Iowa than five
years ago.

UNITED WAY FUNDS PROGRAMS

preventing homelessness, providing legal assistance to avoid foreclosures and evictions, and offering supports needed to attain affordable, stable housing.

United Way successfully advocated

for passage of a bill exempting hunger-fighting organizations from state sales taxes.

Now Iowa’s food banks and pantries can purchase up to an additional one million pounds of food to serve Iowans experiencing hunger.



EARLY CHILDHOOD SUCCESS

Our youngest central Iowans need not only childcare, but access to safe, reliable, and quality childcare to be healthy and ready to learn.

CHILDCARE

Iowa leads the nation in number of families or guardians working outside the home, but has 30% fewer childcare providers than it did five years ago. Childcare is typically the **#1 expense** of a family’s budget, costing more than a month’s college tuition.

UNITED WAY WORKS WITH PARTNERS

to provide high-quality, affordable childcare for families living in low-income households.

United Way successfully advocated

for policy changes to allow more families to remain on the state’s Child Care Assistance program, reducing the cost of quality childcare and keeping parents in the workforce.



United Way of Central Iowa is

UNITED to THRIVE

As United Way of Central Iowa looks to the future, the way we work in the community is evolving to reflect and respond to the changing needs of every central Iowan.

UNITED to THRIVE lays out the path forward as we focus on helping everyone in our community have the opportunity to not only survive, but to **THRIVE**.

UNITED TO SUPPORT EVERY CENTRAL IOWAN

Juan Carlos started middle school not knowing anyone and unsure how to succeed. By joining **Al Éxito**, a United Way funded program, he found friends and supporters who helped him thrive through middle and high school and into college.

The strong personal connections he made helped him focus in school, make college visits, and set his path to medical school. Now he’s helping others find their path. When he graduates, he plans to become a medical provider serving his local Latino community.

Read more at
UnitedWayDM.org/Stories

How UNITED to THRIVE evolves our work:

- The strategies for each of the **5 Elements of a Thriving Community** are focused on growth.
- Progress and impact of inter-dependent strategies will be measured and tracked through **multiple community metrics**.
- All strategies and initiatives place specific emphasis on **EQUITY** and reducing or eliminating barriers so **EVERY** central Iowan has the opportunity to **THRIVE**.



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EDUCATION SUCCESS

Central Iowa students need not only to graduate from high school but should also have the opportunity to graduate with a plan for a successful future.

READING

The percentage of central Iowa's third graders who are reading proficiently is at 53%, a 15-year low and a **23% drop** in the past two years.

For third graders whose households face more significant systemic barriers, **more than 80%** are not reading at grade level.

Students reading proficiently in third grade are

4x

more likely to finish high school.

In the past two years, central Iowa's third grade reading proficiency scores have dropped

23%

UNITED WAY WORKS WITH SCHOOLS

and partners to improve reading scores and provide wrap-around supportive services to our most vulnerable students.



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Central Iowans need not only to be self-sufficient, but to be financially stable and have the opportunity to build wealth for their family and future generations.

4.5%

of employed central Iowans are living in extreme poverty.

EXTREME POVERTY

In central Iowa, 4.5% of those who are employed are living in extreme poverty. In certain areas of our community, **over 20%** of individuals with jobs are living in extreme poverty.

UNITED WAY SUPPORTS TRAINING

and other resources for people to secure good jobs providing sufficient income and opportunities to build wealth.

United Way advocates for job seekers and employers through programs like **Central Iowa Works**, which meets unique needs to provide pathways to good employment in high-demand fields, such as healthcare, logistics, and customer service.



50%

of U.S. adults say they put off or skipped some sort of healthcare in the past year because of the cost.

24%

of Iowa teens contemplated suicide last year.

MENTAL HEALTH

Nearly **1 in 4** of Iowa's eleventh graders said they had seriously contemplated suicide in the last 12 months, and half said they had a plan for how they would carry it out.

UNITED WAY WORKS WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

to eliminate barriers and promote physical, social, and emotional well-being for central Iowa children, families, and adults.





BIG-PICTURE FOCUS

COMMUNITY-LEVEL IMPACT

United Way of Central Iowa

For more than a century, United Way has played a unique role in our community by bringing together people from every part of central Iowa. **TOGETHER**, we look at the big picture, identifying gaps and leverage points. We are **UNITED** in taking on some of our community's toughest challenges and leveraging investments and partnerships to address them at their roots. In addition, we identify specific barriers challenging our community's ability to provide equitable opportunities to **EVERY** central Iowan.

We invest in hundreds of local programs focused on the **5 Elements of a Thriving Community: Essential Needs, Early Childhood Success, Education Success, Economic Opportunity, and Health & Well-Being**. We transparently track and measure the results of those investments to maximize impact, and to hold ourselves and our partners accountable.

GIVE

United Way combines your contribution with donations from others and invests in proven programs making a real, measurable impact.

UnitedWayDM.org/give

ADVOCATE

United Way brings together partners and passionate individuals to advocate for every Iowan through policy and regulation changes at the state and local level.

UnitedWayDM.org/advocate

VOLUNTEER

United Way coordinates volunteer activities for thousands of central Iowans to support initiatives across our community. Find volunteer opportunities with a variety of community partners at

UnitedWayDM.org/volunteer

UNITEDWAYDM.ORG

CENTRAL IOWA IS #1

Central Iowa is the top community in the nation in per-capita giving to United Way for communities that raise more than \$25 million – significantly ahead of every major metropolitan market in the country.



FOUR-STAR CHARITY

For 17 years in a row, United Way of Central Iowa has earned **four stars** from the nation's top nonprofit evaluator, placing us in the top 1% of all nonprofits in the nation.

CharityNavigator.org

