

2026 - 2029

Thriving United Way

STRATEGIC PLAN



UNITED WAY
Champaign County

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UWCC STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2029

For more than 103 years, United Way of Champaign County has been a trusted leader in creating lasting community impact. We remain dedicated to our mission while continuing to evolve so we can be impactful, relevant, and sustainable in a rapidly changing world.

Thriving United Way Framework

The Thriving United Way (TUW) Framework is a blueprint developed by United Way Worldwide in 2023, with meaningful input from local United Ways across the globe. It identifies 24 key indicators of high performance, supported by an assessment designed to help each local United Way understand its strengths, identify opportunities for growth, and track progress over time.

The Framework draws on best practices from United Ways around the world, as well as leading practices across the nonprofit and social sectors. By providing a shared framework for excellence, TUW helps strengthen the United Way network, advance our shared global mission, and ultimately create greater impact in the communities we call home.

The Framework is organized around the following areas:

- Community Leadership
- Equitable Community Impact
- Brand Strength, Awareness, & Relevance
- Diversified Revenue Streams
- Strong Organizational Foundation
- Network Citizenship

In 2025, United Way of Champaign County completed the Thriving United Way Self-Assessment. Over the past year, we have used what we learned to compile a three-year Strategic Plan. With our Board, we paired down from 24 indicators to 9 priorities where we will focus our efforts. This plan focuses on the work we need to do internally so we can continue to bring people and resources together to create positive change and lasting impact in our community for the next 100 years.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Strategic Goal: Community Leadership (TUW Success Factor 2)

UWCC is known as a respected leader and partner in addressing communities' most significant challenges, creating measurable impact and increasing awareness and philanthropic support for UWWCC.

Year 1-3 Action Plan

Objectives:

- Lead multi-sector collaborations that address significant community challenges
- Increase UWCC's visibility and reputation as a community problem solver
- Convert community leadership and demonstrated impact into increased revenue or philanthropic support

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Strategic Goal: Community Impact (TUW Equitable CI Success Factor 1)

Establish measurable impact strategies that reflect community needs and drive equitable outcomes through disaggregated data, long-term goal setting, and strong community and board engagement.

Year 1-3 Action Plan

Objectives:

- Strengthen data-informed decision-making
- Establish bold, long-term goals based on community data
- Improve Board & Community Impact Committee understanding of community needs and outcomes
- Align impact work with branding and communications
- Strengthen collaboration and equity-focused strategies

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Strategic Goal: Community Impact (TUW Equitable CI Success Factor 3)

Creation of data-informed and board-approved public policy priorities/agenda aligned to community impact agenda; strong and regularly cultivated relationships with community leaders and elected officials; participation in local, state, and federal advocacy days.

Year 1-3 Action Plan

Objectives:

- Increase staff knowledge of advocacy work
- Share advocacy opportunities with board
- Strengthen legislator and advocacy engagement
- Establish and integrate policy & advocacy committee

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Goal: (TUW Success Factor 2): Implement year-round donor engagement and fundraising

Build an intentional, year-round donor engagement approach grounded in strong data practices, clear and intentional communication, and personalized stewardship.

Year 1-3 Action Plan

Objectives:

- Strengthen donor data systems and reporting
- Use donor data to drive fundraising strategy
- Expand personalized donor engagement and stewardship

Strategic Goal: (TUW Success Factor 3): Activate Diverse Revenue Streams

Develop a balanced mix of revenue streams that strengthens long-term financial stability and expands opportunities for individual, corporate, and planned giving.

Year 1-3 Action Plan

Objectives:

- Establish a Major and Planned Giving Plan
- Launch and expand small business engagement program
- Develop a rapid-response micro-campaign model
- Create marketing and fundraising materials

LABOR

Strategic Goal

Increase and strengthen Labor/UWCC relationship resulting in increased labor support to/for UWCC related efforts benefiting the community, defining volunteer opportunities for Labor involvement and provide resources for Union members experiencing hard times.

Year 1-3 Action Plan

Objectives:

- Expand Labor's involvement with the community
- Increase Labor participation in UW campaign
- Expand Labor's knowledge and use of community resources

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Strategic Goal (TUW Success Factor 1): Leverage United Way Brand Assets to Build a Strong Reputation Across Local Audiences and Channels

Develop a comprehensive, year-round communications roadmap that guides all messaging and engagement. Support CI team to interpret grant and program data into effective impact stories to be used to build reputation across external audiences and donors. Expand donor communication channels with RD team to increase engagement and visibility.

Year 1-3 Action Plan

Objectives:

- Build a Year-Round Communication Roadmap
- Increase donor engagement touch points beyond campaign cycle
- Integrate automation, segmentation, and scheduled storytelling
- Develop a shared consistent elevator pitch for Staff and Board
- Refresh communication materials to ensure consistency across print, digital, and outreach.
- Expand external communication channels to increase visibility and leverage audiences.
- Strengthen Opportunities for Early Childhood Development Resources
- Increase visibility of community partnerships

STRONG ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATION

Strategic Goal(TUW Success Factor 3): Board and Staff to Drive United Way Performance Using Relevant Resources and Technology

Strengthen United Way's ability to achieve its mission by ensuring all stakeholders have the tools, information, and support needed to make informed, data-driven decisions. We will accomplish this through improved accessibility, enhanced training, updated policies and procedures, strategic technology investments, and dedicated data management to increase organizational efficiency, accountability, and long-term impact.

Year 1-3 Action Plan

Objectives:

- Strengthen Board Development and Engagement Through Technology and Resources
- Build Staff Capacity Through Training, Technology, and Data Management
- Enhance Donor Giving Through Digital Solutions
- Strengthen Organizational Governance and Operational Processes
- Optimize Technology Resources for Efficiency, Integration, and Cost Savings

NETWORK CITIZENSHIP

Network Citizenship Strategic Goal: (From TUW or other) Success Factor 2: Actively Contribute to Network, Local and Regional Collaborations

UWCC is an active participant and provides a leadership role in network best practices sharing and learning at the state, regional, and larger United Way Worldwide network.

Year 1-3 Action Plan

Objectives:

- Participation in network learning/events
- Contribute to the State Network level
- Seek and provided support to neighboring United Ways.