



United Way  
of Greater Chattanooga

# GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

## COMMUNITY GUIDE



As soon as there were humans on earth, there were communities. Early societies worked together to get resources they needed to survive. Ancient artifacts and cave drawings show us that celebrations of marriage and mourning deaths are as old as humankind. Our desire for community is one of our most deep-rooted needs.

From love letters to text messages. From postcards to social media. The mediums change, but our need for connection hasn't. Communities have always worked together to help each other. In fact, the first nonprofits were formed during World War II. But, the system we hoped would fix society's problems isn't perfect - and it can be just as disconnected as the communities it seeks to help.

We are on a mission to change this. Our mission is people-first; it's human-centered. **We unite people and resources to build a stronger, healthier community.**

At some point, we've all given help and needed help. A connected community is the best insurance we have against crisis. That's our mission; our goal we integrate into everything we do. We can't do it without your help.

United,



Lesley Scarce

President & CEO

United Way of Greater Chattanooga





# THE CASE FOR CONNECTION

Within Greater Chattanooga, **21%** of people live in poverty.

We also have **1,600** nonprofits, **1,200** churches, and are **50%** more generous than the average city in philanthropic giving.

## **Education**

Nearly two-thirds of Hamilton County students are below grade level in English and math.<sup>1</sup>

## **Health**

About 10% of the Hamilton County population has a disability.<sup>2</sup>

## **Stability**

Chattanooga ranks 9th worst in the country for economic mobility.<sup>3</sup>

1. <https://www.tn.gov/education/data/report-card.html>

2. <http://health.hamiltontn.org> (2015)

3. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/05/03/upshot/the-best-and-worst-places-to-grow-up-how-your-area-compares.html?abt=0002&abg=0>

# WHO WE ARE

United Way of Greater Chattanooga is a movement empowering individuals, families and organizations to reach their full potential through focusing on education, healthy living and financial stability. Since 1922, we've worked with all subsets of the community to develop solutions to our most critical issues.

We facilitate giving through 14,000 donors and nearly 300 companies in our 6-county service area. We partner with 40+ highly effective nonprofit agencies to meet needs right here in our community, and our service reach extends across the Tennessee Valley.

Every individual deserves the opportunity to thrive. We're working to make that happen in Greater Chattanooga.

**We win together when we LIVE UNITED.**

# OUR APPROACH

Community issues are always complex. But, we believe if we apply these key strategies and collaborate with our expert partners, we are primed to move the needle fastest.

## **Root issues**

We use data to identify root issues of community problems so we can better focus effort there and eliminate a domino effect of problems. We work with local information through our neighborhood data hub. We participate in collaboratives around root issues like adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) to focus on community health by preventing and healing trauma for young children.

## **Strategic partnerships**

We match the resources with the best solutions so all sectors of community can come together around causes they care about. We do this through our unique community investment model, our top-notch nonprofit partners and Hub for Social Innovation.

## **Community mobilization**

We equip the community with the opportunities and best practices to solve problems. We build capacity in organizations with Venture Forward and help companies give back strategically based on their values.

# OUR IMPACT

## EDUCATION

We will increase academic success from cradle to career by enhancing early childhood experiences, child care quality, strengthening early reading skills and supporting youth development.

## HEALTH

We will improve the physical and mental health of the children, families and communities by promoting the adoption of healthy behaviors and access to care.

## STABILITY

We will improve the financial stability of low to middle income families by enhancing a system of sustainable employment, income and basic needs supports and educational attainment.

## CONNECTION

We strive to see that families and individuals live in connected, giving, engaged, safe communities.





# OUR PLAN

Everything we do – from donations to dreams – falls into three areas.

## IMPACT

Support and services you know with new, community collaborative strategy.

## INNOVATION

Helping organizations try new things and work together.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

Investing in holistic, grassroots health of communities.

**GET**

**INVOLVED**



**Uniting individuals and organizations to solve key issues is what we do best. Join a connected community through giving, advocating and volunteering.**

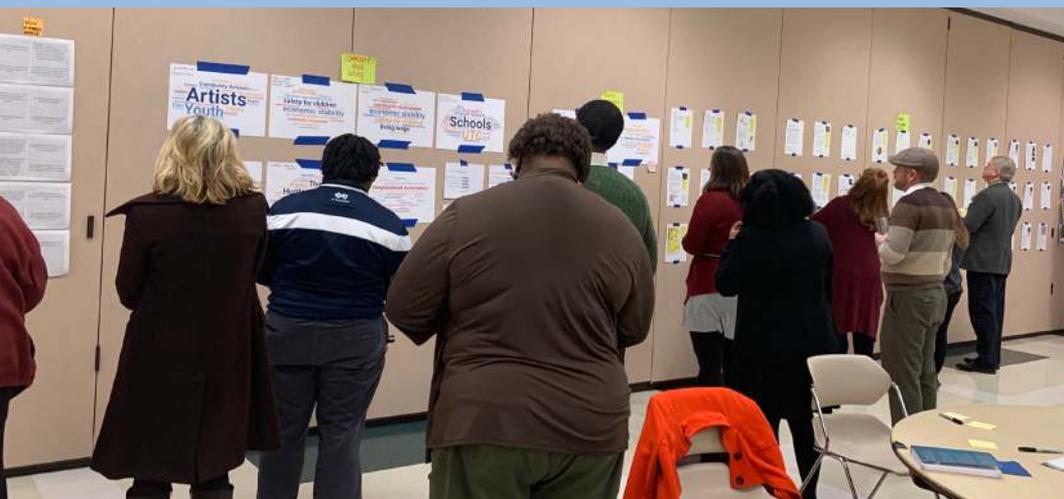


# GIVE

Funding solutions to our community's problems is one of the simplest ways that we can make huge impact. We work with a network of more than 40 highly effective partners across six counties doing what no one agency can do alone: get your dollars where they are needed most.

*“Partnering with United Way through the community investment process empowers our community to discuss and identify the greatest problems for those in need and creatively problem solve. Through combining our efforts and working together in new and innovative ways, we are able to affect change.”*

*Rachel Gammon, Executive Director of Northside Neighborhood House*



**Every year, we're invited into nearly 300 local workplaces to craft unique community engagement plans with the community on how to give back in meaningful ways. You have an opportunity to give with United Way year-round.**

### **AT WORK: Participate in a workplace campaign.**

If your workplace doesn't already have a United Way campaign, start one. Last year, we distributed millions back into the Greater Chattanooga communities because of workplace giving. We work to make every corporate giving relationship unique to the corporate social responsibility goals of each organization.

### **AS A LEADER: Become part of the Leadership Club.**

Many donors give to United Way at the leadership level annually because they believe in the impact we can have when we put our plan into action with the resources we need to create measurable, lasting change. Ask us more about:

- The Leadership Club - \$83 or more per month
- The Toqueville Society - \$830 or more per month

### **AS AN INDIVIDUAL: Donate to a cause you care about.**

Follow us on social media or visit our website to see seasonal, cause-based campaigns you can contribute toward. We've placed nearly one million Imagination Library books in children's homes, laid the groundwork for 2-1-1 kiosks in schools and helped local individuals in times of struggle through Neediest Cases because of cause-based donations like this.



# ADVOCATE

How might we ensure we are prioritizing conversations around the most pressing issues facing our communities? It all begins with listening to the lived experiences of our neighbors and comparing it with the trends we see in community data. We're here to make sure you know what is facing our community and are educated, engaged and empowered to make a difference.

***“United Way is instrumental in community advocacy to ensure policy makers and decision makers are provided the data that can influence systemic change and impact the entire Hamilton County region. This allows us to make strong decisions that address the foundational issues of a strong community,” said Katherlyn Geter, Hamilton County Commissioner, District 5.***



**We have a shared responsibility to identify and advocate for critical issues that impact our community. By understanding data, research and the experiences of vested stakeholders, we will use our collective voices to express and share relevant and meaningful information with giving communities, social organizations and policy makers.**

## **JOIN AN ENGAGEMENT COMMUNITY.**

Something amazing happens when we collaborate with passionate thinkers and doers. By joining a United Way engagement community, you can join like-hearted individuals in unique opportunities to make an impact. Whether it's engaging with other young professionals through Emerging Leaders or collaborating with passionate women through Women United, you can give back in a way that's meaningful to you.

## **SUPPORT OUR ADVOCACY WORK.**

We collaborate with leaders from all community sectors to work with government entities at the local, state and national level to elevate key issues and provide data and solutions of policies that will work for the whole community.

## **LEARN WHAT'S HAPPENING.**

Follow our blog to learn the reality of what's happening right here in Greater Chattanooga. If you educate yourself on the real issues and how each of us can help, we'll create the community we all want to see. Visit the blog on [unitedwaycha.org](http://unitedwaycha.org).



# VOLUNTEER

John Rutter at Elder's ACE Hardware looks forward to the Day of Caring every year. ACE donates tools and countless supplies so hundreds of volunteers across the region can participate in volunteer projects at nonprofit sites. Things like groundskeeping or organizing donations may not seem like much in isolation, but for the 2018 Day of Caring, 750 volunteers came together to complete 30+ projects across Greater Chattanooga.

*"In the nonprofit sector, we don't always have the resources to do everything we'd like to do," said Emily Barrow from Chambliss Center for Children. "The tasks that we got done during Day of Caring would've cost us thousands. That's money we can now put toward growing our services and providing for more children and their families."*



**When we roll up our sleeves and serve the community, we make a real difference for people in need and in our lives, too.**

**Ways to volunteer:**

## **AS AN INDIVIDUAL: Connect with our volunteer center.**

View current community needs anytime at [ihelpchattanooga.org](http://ihelpchattanooga.org). You can lend your special skills and expertise or just a helping hand to grateful nonprofit organizations and more across Greater Chattanooga. We also recommend the Chattanooga Mentoring Collective as a great place to mentor a local student and give back in a long-term, meaningful way.

## **WITH A COMMUNITY: Participate in group service opportunities.**

Every year, we facilitate group volunteering events like Day of Caring and others. Whether you're with your work team, your family or other caring individuals, there are multiple ways to be part of our strong volunteer community every year.



# CONNECT.

UnitedWayCha.org



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