



UNITED WAY
Greater Chattanooga

2030 IMPACT AGENDA





Friends of United Way,

The vision of United Way of Greater Chattanooga is not just ours - it's yours, too.

Over the past year, our dedicated team has been working to chart a course for the future of United Way of Greater Chattanooga. We conducted a Needs Assessment to gather data on the challenges facing families in our community, held Community Roundtables to hear the stories and experiences of those families, listened deeply to what our partners need, and now we're translating that data into transformative action.

Throughout all of these efforts, our mission has remained steadfast: *to connect people and resources to build a stronger, healthier community*. However, as we move forward, it is essential that we adapt what we do and how we show up to the evolving needs of our community. That's why I am thrilled to introduce our 2030 Impact Agenda, a plan for driving impact through this decade and beyond.

As you review our plans, I hope that the key takeaway is this: your involvement and support are the driving forces behind real change for families in our region. United Way of Greater Chattanooga is uniquely positioned to serve as a bridge in our community, connecting resources, needs, and aspirations, but we could never accomplish such ambitious goals without partnership.

I hope this message not only serves as an introduction but also as an open invitation to be part of the transformative change we intend to create for families in our community.

I look forward to sharing our progress and successes with you in the coming years.

United,

Lesley Searce
President & CEO
United Way of Greater Chattanooga

United Way of Greater Chattanooga is more than just a fundraiser.

We are on a mission to unite our community with a shared aspiration for the future, one where every child can thrive, and one where working families can break the cycle of financial hardship.

Together, we can turn this vision into a reality.



OUR ASPIRATION

Unite our community to uplift children and working families living in financial hardship.

Because children are the heart of our future, children will become the central focus of our work at United Way of Greater Chattanooga. Our goal is to make greater Chattanooga truly *greater*—a great place to grow up for every child. As an impact-focused organization, we recognize that children are the product of their families and their community. Therefore, those three groups—kids, families, community—will become the focus of our work.

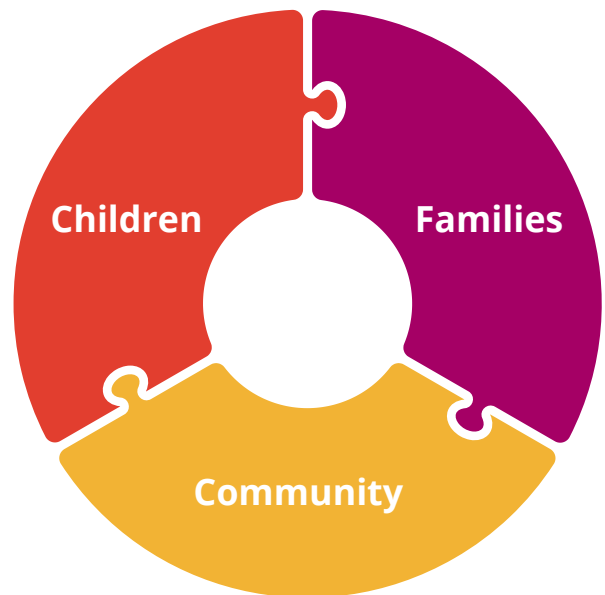
To realize substantial gains for children, we must connect families to what they need, whether that's at home, in childcare, at school, at work or in their neighborhood. As a community change agent, we employ a variety of approaches, working everyday to build an ecosystem of partners, all working together to make steady, impactful improvements in the lives of our children.

IMPACT PRIORITIES

Opportunities for all Children: We are supporting a healthy start and quality learning experiences for all children, regardless of race, income, neighborhood, or ability.

Economic Mobility for Families: We are investing in efforts to help working families obtain stable, high-quality jobs and take control of their financial future.

A More Connected Community: We are helping to build a vibrant and engaged community where children and families can thrive.





ALICE

Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed

Rethinking “financial hardship” to include our neighbors earning above the poverty level but still living paycheck to paycheck.



A family's path to self-sufficiency is often filled with obstacles that can slow or even prevent them from thriving. Stability evades many families earning above the poverty level yet still living paycheck to paycheck, and it's even more elusive for families caught in the cycle of generational poverty.

We have a responsibility to focus our resources where the greatest impact can be made.

That means our work will be focused on supporting families using both the Federal Poverty Level and **ALICE metrics**.

Together, these indicators provide a holistic view of financial hardship in our community.



Scan to meet ALICE!

THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN GROWING UP IN FINANCIAL HARDSHIP A SNAPSHOT ^a



HAMILTON COUNTY
9,744 HOUSEHOLDS

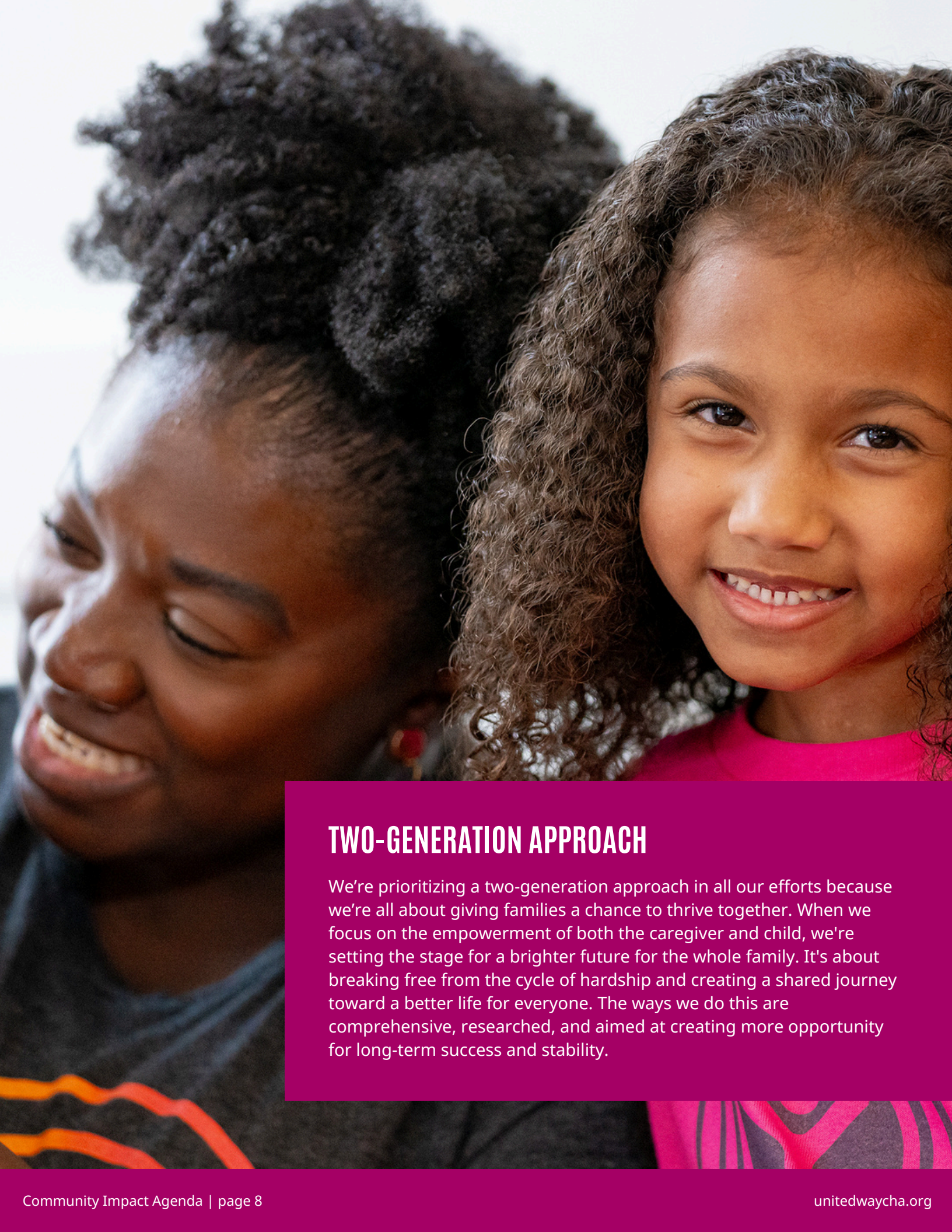


MARION COUNTY
358 HOUSEHOLDS



SEQUATCHIE COUNTY
696 HOUSEHOLDS





TWO-GENERATION APPROACH

We're prioritizing a two-generation approach in all our efforts because we're all about giving families a chance to thrive together. When we focus on the empowerment of both the caregiver and child, we're setting the stage for a brighter future for the whole family. It's about breaking free from the cycle of hardship and creating a shared journey toward a better life for everyone. The ways we do this are comprehensive, researched, and aimed at creating more opportunity for long-term success and stability.



WHOLE FAMILY

CHILD FOCUS WITH PARENT ELEMENTS

*parenting skills,
health screenings,
family literacy, and early
childhood development*



CHILD FOCUSED

PARENT FOCUS WITH CHILD ELEMENTS

*workforce programs, food and
nutritional assistance, support
for student parents*



PARENT FOCUSED

SIX CORE ACTION AREAS

These six areas of operational work define how we are deploying resources and building a team of changemakers to support children and working families.



Build an Ecosystem of Nonprofits

We are empowering our nonprofit partners to work directly with ALICE families to build deeper connections and foster additional services with a two-generation approach. We are arming nonprofits with the resources and training they need to build capacity, test innovative and collaborative approaches, and expand the range of incomes they can serve.



Align Investment Strategy

We are aligning our investment strategy to the needs of the community by adjusting the grant funding process to prioritize opportunities that include a two-generation approach, serve ALICE families with children, and employ a collaborative approach. All investments, from external partners to internal initiatives will align with our impact metrics, a results-based accountability framework built on trust.



Strengthen Basic Need Services

Through expanding basic needs investment dollars and improving the accessibility to funds, we are strengthening the basic need services in our community. These efforts will also include increased efficiencies and improved service of the 211 platform. We are also committed to ensuring efficient mobilization of basic need services for disaster relief and recovery, serving as a convener for response coordination in times of crisis.

SIX CORE ACTION AREAS



Drive Public Policy

We are building and maintaining partnerships at the local, state, and federal level to support policies that impact ALICE families with children in our community.



Empower Local Businesses to Act

We are building deeper relationships with local businesses to educate employees on the needs in the community and how they can get involved through volunteering, giving, and championing for change. Through initiatives like United for Working Families, we are empowering local businesses to improve family-friendly policies to increase operational functions that support our community.

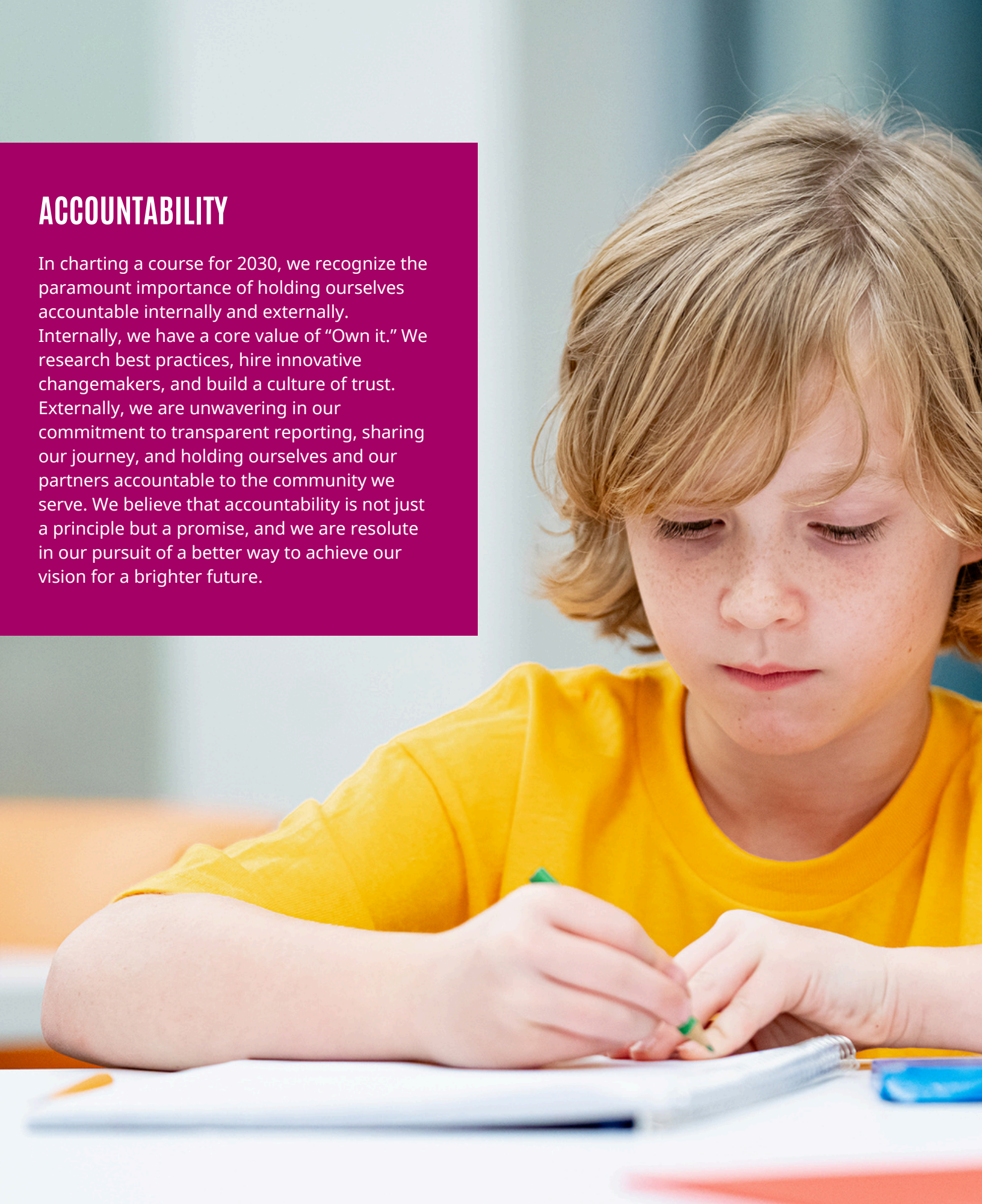


Engage Volunteers and Donors to Support

We are building a more connected community of volunteers and philanthropists by connecting community members to ways they can give back that are meaningful to them. We are expanding volunteer opportunities, fostering collaboration across generations, and connecting individuals to the right engagement groups that empower them to make a meaningful difference in our community.

ACCOUNTABILITY

In charting a course for 2030, we recognize the paramount importance of holding ourselves accountable internally and externally. Internally, we have a core value of “Own it.” We research best practices, hire innovative changemakers, and build a culture of trust. Externally, we are unwavering in our commitment to transparent reporting, sharing our journey, and holding ourselves and our partners accountable to the community we serve. We believe that accountability is not just a principle but a promise, and we are resolute in our pursuit of a better way to achieve our vision for a brighter future.





COMMUNITY-LED INVESTING

Our grantmaking process goes beyond traditional philanthropy by embracing a community-led approach. Community volunteers will continue to evaluate applications and recommend investments. Those volunteers will reflect the geographic and demographic makeup of our footprint, and bring an intentional array of lived and professional expertise related to our impact priorities. Our team will guide, facilitate, share data and community needs, and help frame the process based on best practices, but ultimately, funding decisions are directed by community members representing the community itself.



GROUNDING IN EMPATHY

For our long-term work to be impactful, we believe it must be grounded in empathy. We strive to understand the unique needs of our community by listening to the lived experiences of our neighbors and building trust in every corner of our region. By measuring progress with disaggregated data, we ensure that every voice and experience helps shape a stronger future for all.





OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL CHILDREN

Children have more opportunities to thrive when they have a healthy start in life, quality learning experiences preparing them for adulthood, and healthy and engaged parents and caregivers. This is universally true for all children, regardless of race, income, neighborhood, or ability. Unfortunately, we know that children in our region don't universally have access to these building blocks of opportunity. This is why we are specifically focused on improving access for children in households living below the ALICE threshold, which are disproportionately children of color.

To support families in giving their children a healthy start, we invest in models that are proven to support healthy birth outcomes, quality maternal and infant health care, and children's early development. We invest in efforts that increase access to healthcare, with a particular focus on mental health, and that increase access to fresh, local healthy food and improve nutrition for children and families.

To support quality learning experiences, we invest in improving access to appropriate, high-quality early childhood education and out-of-school programs that support whole-child development, while engaging a child's family every step of the way.

To strengthen education and health outcomes, we elevate community voices and work with partners to support policies and systems that help families and leaders prioritize children's well-being.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL CHILDREN

We are supporting a healthy start and quality learning experiences for all children, regardless of race, income, neighborhood, or ability.

89%

of Hamilton County Students who do not arrive to kindergarten equipped with the skills necessary to be successful are not on grade level by the end of the third grade. ^b

Hamilton County Public School Students score approximately

50%

lower on reading proficiency when compared to the national average. ^c



In 2022, 66.5% of youth in TN and 67.8% in GA with **major depressive episodes (MDE)** did not receive mental health services. ^d

IMPACT GOALS

- More children are born healthy and more expectant mothers will remain healthy before, during, and after childbirth.
- More children and adults will be fully insured and able to access comprehensive, high-quality healthcare services, including mental health and disease prevention resources.
- Increase access to high-quality, affordable early childhood education and ensure more parents/caregivers receive early childhood resources to prepare their children to succeed in school.
- With the support of in-school and out-of-school programs, more children will succeed academically, advance to higher grades, and graduate high school ready for college or work.
- Improve access to fresh, healthy food for children and their parents/caregivers to promote healthy, productive lifestyles.

HOW SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED (Participants are individuals who use services from United Way or a funded partner)

HOW MUCH WE DID

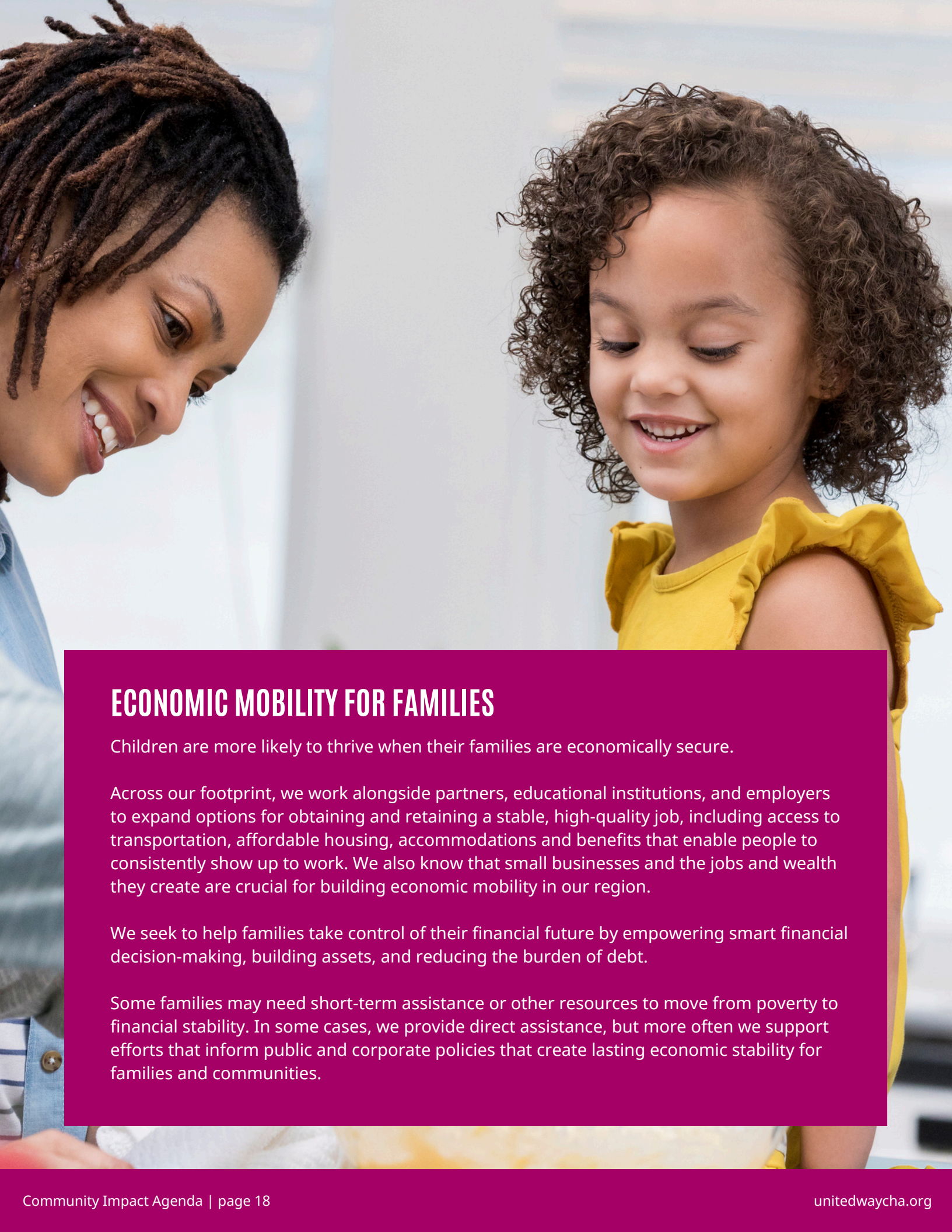
- Number of children attending the program (well visits, school, etc.)
- Number of students participating in out-of-school programs (mentoring, tutoring, enrichment, etc.)
- Number of individuals who receive mental health crisis intervention
- Number of parents/caregivers served in the program
- Number of active, accessible and quality early childhood opportunities

HOW WELL WE DID IT

- Number of parents/caregivers who successfully accessed early childhood resources
- Number of children who were born healthy and received quality prenatal care
- Number of students that show maintaining and/or improvement in reading level
- Number of students that show maintaining and/or improvement in 8th grade algebra
- Number of students demonstrating increase in job readiness skills
- Number of students demonstrating an increased understanding of high school choices
- Number of high school seniors graduating on time
- Number of students demonstrating an increased knowledge of college choices

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

- #/% increase of students demonstrating improvement in school attendance
- #/% increase of students promoted to the next grade level on time
- #/% increase of parents reporting an increase in school-based engagement participation
- #/% increase of students that enroll in post-secondary education
- #/% increase of children covered by health insurance
- #/% increase in enrollment in affordable, high quality early childhood education



ECONOMIC MOBILITY FOR FAMILIES

Children are more likely to thrive when their families are economically secure.

Across our footprint, we work alongside partners, educational institutions, and employers to expand options for obtaining and retaining a stable, high-quality job, including access to transportation, affordable housing, accommodations and benefits that enable people to consistently show up to work. We also know that small businesses and the jobs and wealth they create are crucial for building economic mobility in our region.

We seek to help families take control of their financial future by empowering smart financial decision-making, building assets, and reducing the burden of debt.

Some families may need short-term assistance or other resources to move from poverty to financial stability. In some cases, we provide direct assistance, but more often we support efforts that inform public and corporate policies that create lasting economic stability for families and communities.

ECONOMIC MOBILITY



We are investing in efforts to help working families obtain stable, high-quality jobs and take control of their financial future.

70% Of the 20 most common occupations in TN, 70% pay less than \$20/hour. ^e



Chattanooga's median rent increased 30% since 2020, while the income level of the median renter only grew by about 13%. ^f



Southern states account for 9 out of 10 states most burdened by credit card debt and penalties associated with this type of debt. The burden is so high that families making the median household income would need more than 18 months to pay off the balance. ^g

IMPACT GOALS

- Improve technical and soft job skills among unemployed/underemployed adults and make connections to high quality employment.
- Reduce obstacles to employment including access to transportation, quality, affordable childcare, and accommodations.
- By providing access to affordable housing and offering financial tools for debt management and reduction, more families will be empowered to increase their savings and investments.
- Increase access to small business support and capacity building resources to empower families to build financial stability and create jobs in our region.
- More local workplaces provide families and individuals access to family-friendly employment opportunities (eg. benefits such as childcare, health care, fair wages, flexibility, etc.)

HOW SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED

(Participants are individuals who use services from United Way or a funded partner)

HOW MUCH WE DID

- Number of participants enrolled in adult education classes
- Number of participants served by the program
- Number of unduplicated individuals who accessed a financial education course in order to increase financial literacy
- Number of black and brown individuals who engaged in entrepreneurial programs

HOW WELL WE DID IT

- Number of participants who completed training and retained employment upon exit of program
- Number of participants that were able to access the program (childcare, transportation, etc.)
- Number of participants engaged in identifying personal goals and are taking steps toward achieving them
- Number of participants who secured stable, safe housing
- Number of participants who went from unbanked to banked by opening a checking/savings account
- Number of black and brown individuals who launched an entrepreneurial venture

IS ANYONE IS BETTER OFF?

- #/% increase of participants who successfully complete their program goals
- #/% increase of participants who successfully maintain housing
- #/% increase of participants who increase wages
- #/% increase of participants who maintain employment at 6-month or 12-month check
- #/% increase of families whose self-sufficiency has improved
- #/% increase of participants who achieve financial stability
- #/% increase of unduplicated individuals who report increased savings.
- #/% increase of unduplicated individuals who report an improvement in their credit score.
- #/% increase of unduplicated individuals who reduce nonmortgage debt.



A MORE CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Connected communities are resilient communities, prepared to mobilize resources and work together in moments of crisis. Connected communities are also places where all children and families can thrive and contribute. One where we can celebrate our individual uniqueness while finding our shared humanity and sense of care for one another.

We seek to advance connection, and build a generation of kids who know they matter. To achieve this, we work to bridge the gap between those in need and those willing to help. We work across the community, building deeper connections among local businesses, nonprofits, and state and local governments to foster collaboration and innovation. When we work together, we can address the complex challenges facing our community.

The core of our work is connecting the community, promoting civic engagement, and empowering individuals to be part of the solution with us. Uniting people in the human experience is essential to creating the vibrant and connected community we envision.

CONNECTED COMMUNITY



We are helping to build a vibrant and engaged community where children and families can thrive.



Lacking social connection can increase premature death **as much as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.** ^h

Social isolation among older adults accounts for

\$6.7 Bil

in excess Medicare costs. ⁱ



Approximately half of U.S. adults report experiencing loneliness, with some of the highest rates among young adults. ^j

IMPACT GOALS



Improve access to safe outdoor environments for all abilities to strengthen communities and promote active lifestyles among children and families.



Improve mobilization and collaboration of community resources for disaster relief and recovery.



Increase collaborative and innovative relationships among nonprofit service providers.



An increased percentage of families in need are assisted by the 211 helpline to receive access to basic needs, community resources, and public benefits.



Increase in the rate of volunteerism, giving, community engagement, and networking opportunities across the community.

HOW SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED

(Participants are individuals who use services from United Way or a funded partner)

HOW MUCH WE DID

- Number of participants who accessed case managers, mentors, or career coaches
- Number of volunteer hours reported and philanthropic gifts made
- Number of stakeholders convened to understand/strengthen awareness of social capital
- Number of people who accessed social infrastructure opportunities (libraries, parks, volunteer organizations, houses of worship, government support services. etc.)

HOW WELL WE DID IT

- Number of positive relationships and frequent interactions
- Number of participants who report a sense of belonging and mattering
- Number of participants who report an increase in positive, helpful, or satisfying relationships
- Number of participants retained from year to year/advancing forward in programming
- Number of people who report easier access to community resources

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

- #/% increase of people reporting a decrease in overall loneliness and isolation
- #/% increase of people who report connection to a positive social network
- #/% increase of people who report greater social engagement with their community and in civic duty
- #/% increase of new physical assets, program, and policies that support the development of social connection

DATA REFERENCES

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- j. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2023). Surgeon General's Advisory on the Importance of Social Connection. **hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf**



A photograph of three babies lying on their stomachs on a light-colored, quilted blanket. The babies are arranged in a triangular pattern. The baby on the left has dark hair and blue eyes. The baby in the center has light skin and dark eyes. The baby on the right has dark skin and curly hair. All three babies are wearing grey t-shirts with a colorful circular logo. The logo features a stylized figure in the center, surrounded by concentric circles in shades of orange, red, and blue.

**BECAUSE CHANGE
DOESN'T HAPPEN ALONE.**

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UNITED WAY
Greater Chattanooga