



IMPACT

# AGENDA

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United Way of  
Southwest Michigan

# 2022 - 2025

## IMPACT AGENDA FOR CHANGE

United Way of Southwest Michigan is proud to share the 2022-2025 Agenda for Change. This document has been years in the making, and it reflects an approach to community impact that is focused on issues, grounded in community, and acknowledges the diverse realities of people in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties.

As our community lived through everything that 2020 threw at us, our organizational mantra became “I don’t want to go back to normal,” because enduring a global pandemic, systemic inequity and oppression, and extreme political divisiveness reminded us that life before 2020 wasn’t really all that great for a lot of people in Southwest Michigan.

With that in mind, there were four things we wanted to accomplish with this new agenda. First, we wanted to create a better, more intentional mechanism to support projects that create change at the systems, policy, and environmental level. Second, we wanted to streamline and simplify the application and reporting process for all programs and projects.

Third, we wanted to incorporate the results of our Turning Outward efforts and design the who/what/where/when/why/how of our work around our community’s aspirations for connection and inclusion. Lastly, we knew it was imperative to have equity serve as the foundation that the agenda was built on.

United Way of Southwest Michigan fights for the health, education, and financial stability of every person in every community. In saying that, we recognize that not every person has the same lived experience, which means that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to changing lives and building stronger communities.

As you read through this Agenda, understand that United Way of Southwest Michigan can’t do this work in isolation. Just creating this document took the commitment of our board and committee members, the expertise of our staff, the input and feedback from our current partners, the needs of our donors, and the aspirations of our community. Bringing this work to life will require continued dedication from all of those people and more.



**Because if there’s one thing we know, it’s that change doesn’t happen alone. The kind of community that we all want can only be created when we all LIVE UNITED.**

# GLOSSARY

**BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES** – This type of investment includes projects that make change to systems, policies, environments, or capacity.

**CHANGE LIVES** – This type of investment includes programs that will lead to change in individuals.

**CONNECTED & INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY** - A community where there is a sense of belonging for all individuals; the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued.

**DEMOGRAPHICS** – Basic characteristics of those served. United Way of Southwest Michigan asks that Impact Partners track age, gender identity, race/ethnicity, and zip code of residence.

**E-CIMPACT** – The funding and reporting management system used by many United Ways across the country.

**EQUITY** – The intentional inclusion of everyone in society. Equity is achieved when systemic, institutional, and historical barriers based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other identities are dismantled and no longer predict socioeconomic, education, and health outcomes.

**EQUITY STATEMENT** – An organization's commitment to build a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment, welcoming and serving people of all backgrounds.


**FUNDING CYCLE** – UWSM has a one-, two- or three-year funding cycle, depending on the project.

**IMPACT AREA** – United Way of Southwest Michigan has four Impact Areas – Education, Financial Stability, Health and Basic Needs.

**IMPACT CABINET** – A committee of the United Way of Southwest Michigan Board of Directors that oversees the work of the Impact Strategies department. The Impact Cabinet approves the funding recommendations made by the Investment Teams. The Impact Cabinet then proposes the funding recommendations to the United Way of Southwest Michigan Board of Directors for final approval.

**IMPACT PARTNER** – A nonprofit organization that is approved to receive funding from United Way of Southwest Michigan.

**INDICATORS** – The measurable change that takes place in the community. These may include changes in systems, policies, environments, or capacity.



**INVESTMENT TEAM** – A group of volunteers that recommend and monitor the funding decisions for each three-year funding cycle. United Way of Southwest Michigan has eight Investment Teams, one for each Issue.

**ISSUES** – Community conditions that United Way Southwest Michigan has chosen to address, based on expert and public knowledge. United Way of Southwest Michigan has eight Issue Areas – Early Education & Literacy; Post-Secondary Success; Financial Security; Employment; Healthy Bodies; Healthy Minds; Food Security; Safe Environment.

**PROGRESS REPORTS** – Partners must provide progress reports. Every six months, the reports will include a success story, updated contact information and a program narrative. Annually, these reports will include number served, demographics, updates on outputs/outcomes/indicators, organization and program budgets, and leveraged dollars. These reports are submitted through eImpact.

**MEASUREMENT/EVALUATION TOOL** – The mechanism used to track outcomes.

**MOBILIZE RESOURCES** – This strategy outlines United Way of Southwest Michigan’s commitment to invest financially in these impact areas and invest through promoting and providing avenues of volunteerism. This strategy is United Way specific and is not taking applications for funding.

**OUTCOMES** – The measurable change that takes place in the lives of the people served. Such changes include awareness, knowledge, skill, motivation, and behavior.

**OUTPUTS** – The number of units of service provided (i.e., the number of people served).


**PARTNER MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT** – The agreement that United Way of Southwest Michigan enters into with each Impact Partner. The PMOA outlines the responsibilities and requirements that are expected of both United Way of Southwest Michigan and the Impact Partner.

**PROGRAM BUDGET** – When applying for funding, each organization must provide a program budget.

**OPERATING BUDGET** – When applying for funding, each organization must provide an organizational budget.

**STRATEGIES** – Types of interventions that United Way of Southwest Michigan has identified for possible investments.

**TURNING OUTWARD** – An orientation – a mindset, a posture - of using the community as a reference point for creating change; seeing and hearing people in the community and acting with intentionality to create change that fits their aspirations.



## CHANGE LIVES

# DECISION TOOL

## BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES

**Is United Way Change Lives funding right for you?**

**This type of investment includes programs that will lead to change in individuals.**

**This tool will help determine if your organization can meet all of the requirements to receive United Way funding under Change Lives.**

*Before you apply for funding through the 2022 – 2025 funding cycle, consider your answers to these questions?*

- Does your program align with the Impact Areas, Issues, Goals, Strategies and Outcomes/Outputs outlined in this document?
- Can your program measure one or more of the Outcomes/Outputs listed in the applicable Issue under Change Lives?
- Does your program have a measurement tool that can be administered on a regular and consistent basis, or are you willing to implement one prior to the start of the funding cycle?
- Can your program track the categories of demographics outlined in this document (age, gender, ethnicity, zip code of residence)? If not, is there a justifiable reason?
- Is your organization willing and able to provide all of the information and reporting outlined in the Funding Request documents?
- Is your organization willing to adhere to all of the terms and conditions set forth in the Partner Memorandum of Agreement?

**Is United Way Build Stronger Communities funding right for you?**

**This type of investment includes projects that make change to systems, policies, environments, or capacity.**

**This tool will help determine if your organization can meet all of the requirements to receive United Way funding under Build Stronger Communities.**

*Before you apply for funding through the 2022 – 2025 funding cycle, consider your answers to these questions?*

- Does your project align with the Impact Areas, Issues, Goals, Strategies and Indicators outlined in this document?
- Can your project measure one or more of the Indicators listed in the applicable Issue under Build Stronger Communities?
- Does your project have a measurement tool or evaluation plan that can be administered on a regular and consistent basis, or are you willing to implement one prior to the start of the funding cycle?
- If applicable, can your project track the categories of demographics outlined in this document (age, gender, ethnicity, zip code of residence)? If not, is there a justifiable reason?
- Is your organization willing and able to provide all of the information and reporting outlined in the Funding Request documents?
- Is your organization willing to adhere to all of the terms and conditions set forth in the Partner Memorandum of Agreement?

**If your answer to ANY of these questions is “no,” then it is not suggested that you seek UWSM funding. If you are unsure of your answer, you are encouraged to contact the Impact Strategies department for clarification and guidance. Contact information is provided at the end of this document.**

# EDUCATION

## ISSUE: EARLY EDUCATION & LITERACY



### GOAL

Decrease the number of students not reading proficiently by the end of 3rd grade and reduce racial and economic disparities

#### Outputs:

- # of children participating in home visiting programs
- # of children participating in quality childcare and/or preschool programs
- # of parents and/or caregivers receiving parenting education
- # of children who have access to books
- # of children participating in out-of-school/in-school programming and/or supports

#### Outcomes:

- % of children who show progress toward or achieve developmental milestones
- % of parents and/or caregivers who increase knowledge of children's development
- % of children who increase their reading level



**CHANGE LIVES**



**BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

#### Indicators:

- # of policies or practices created, changed, or promoted
- # of people trained
- # of organizations impacted
- # or value of equipment purchased
- # of ways or value of additional capacity created

#### Financial Investments:

- Value of resources invested

#### Volunteer Engagement:

- # of volunteers mobilized
- # of volunteer hours given
- # of volunteer projects



**MOBILIZE RESOURCES**



### STRATEGIES

- Home Visiting Programs
- Quality Childcare and/or Preschool
- Parenting Education
- Access to Books
- Out of School/In School Programming/Supports



### GOAL

Decrease the number of adults who do not have a post-secondary credential and reduce racial and economic disparities

#### Outputs:

- # of students participating in mentoring/tutoring programs
- # of students participating in career & technical education
- # of students served to overcome obstacles

#### Outcomes:

- % of students who graduate high school on time
- % of students who develop soft skills
- % of students who are working toward post-secondary education or credentials
- % of students who gain post-secondary education or credentials



**CHANGE LIVES**



**BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

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**MOBILIZE RESOURCES**



### STRATEGIES

- Mentoring/Tutoring
- Career & Technical Education
- Overcoming Obstacles

# FINANCIAL STABILITY

## ISSUE: FINANCIAL SECURITY



### GOAL

Decrease the number of households who have incomes below the ALICE threshold and reduce racial and economic disparities

#### Outputs:

- # of people participating in financial education
- # of people participating in financial coaching

#### Outcomes:

- % of people who increase their financial health
- % of people who increase their financial knowledge



CHANGE LIVES



BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES

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MOBILIZE RESOURCES



### STRATEGIES

- Financial Education
- Financial Coaching





### GOAL

Decrease the unemployment rate and reduce racial and economic disparities

#### Outputs:

- # of people participating in job skills training
- # of people served to overcome obstacles

#### Outcomes:

- % of people who gain, maintain, or improve employment status
- % of people who earn job-relevant credentials
- % of people who increase their skills



**CHANGE LIVES**



**BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

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#### Volunteer Engagement:

- # of volunteers mobilized
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- # of volunteer projects



**MOBILIZE RESOURCES**



### STRATEGIES

- Overcoming Obstacles
- Job Skills Training



### GOAL

Decrease the number of people who report poor physical health

#### Outputs:

- # of people participating in physical activity programs
- # of people participating in health education
- # of people who have access to healthy, affordable, and available food
- # of people who have access to health services

#### Outcomes:

- % of people who adopt healthy behaviors
- % of people who increase their knowledge of health behaviors



**CHANGE LIVES**



**BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

#### Indicators:

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#### Volunteer Engagement:

- # of volunteers mobilized
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- # of volunteer projects



**MOBILIZE RESOURCES**



### STRATEGIES

- Physical Activity
- Health Education
- Access to Healthy, Affordable & Available Food
- Access to Health Services



### GOAL

Decrease the number of people who report poor mental health

#### Outputs:

- # of people participating in counseling and support
- # of people served to build their resilience
- # of people participating in rehabilitation and recovery programs
- # of people who receive respite and/or companionship

#### Outcomes:

- % of people who increase their mental and/or emotional health
- % of people who avoid or reduce risky behaviors



**CHANGE LIVES**



**BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

#### Indicators:

- # of policies or practices created, changed, or promoted
- # of people trained
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- # or value of equipment purchased
- # of ways or value of additional capacity created

#### Financial Investments:

- Value of resources invested

#### Volunteer Engagement:

- # of volunteers mobilized
- # of volunteer hours given
- # of volunteer projects



**MOBILIZE RESOURCES**



### STRATEGIES

- Counseling & Support
- Resiliency Building
- Rehabilitation & Recovery
- Respite & Companionship

# BASIC NEEDS

## ISSUE: FOOD SECURITY



### GOAL

Decrease the number of individuals who are food insecure

#### Outputs:

- # of people provided with food
- # of meals provided



CHANGE LIVES



BUILD STRONGER  
COMMUNITIES

#### Indicators:

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- # of volunteer projects



MOBILIZE  
RESOURCES



### STRATEGIES

- Access to Food

# BASIC NEEDS

## ISSUE: SAFE ENVIRONMENT

### Outputs:

- # of people provided shelter
- # of people provided with case management
- # of people provided emergency financial assistance
- # of bills paid for emergency financial assistance
- Value of bills paid for emergency financial assistance



**CHANGE LIVES**



**BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

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**MOBILIZE RESOURCES**



## STRATEGIES

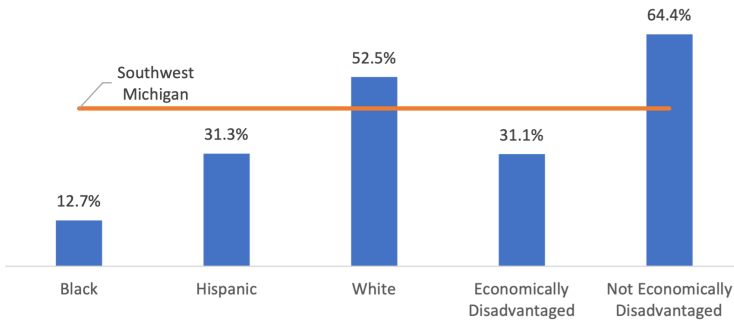


- Emergency Assistance
- Housing Support
- Case Management

# DATA SNAPSHOT

Full data charts can be found at [uwsn.org/agenda](http://uwsn.org/agenda)

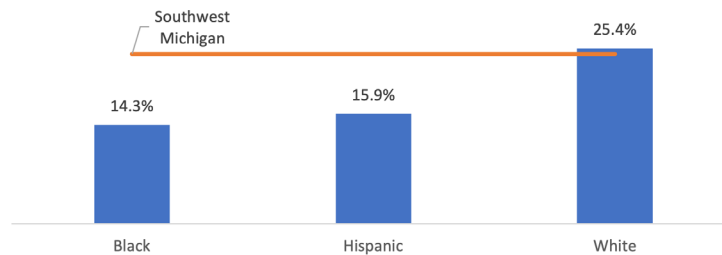
Ongoing educational inequities have led to an achievement gap in **3rd graders who read proficiently**



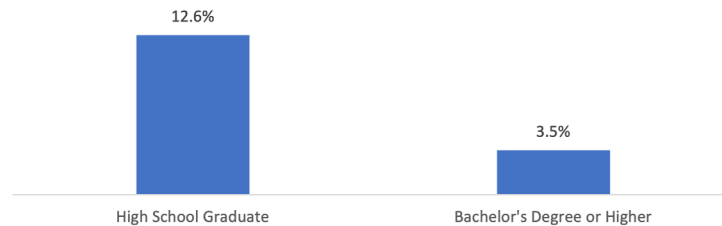
As late as the 1960s most Black, Latino, and Native American students were educated in wholly segregated schools funded at rates many times lower than those serving whites and were excluded from many higher education institutions entirely. Nationally, two-thirds of BIPOC students still attend schools that are predominantly BIPOC, most of them located in central cities and funded well below those in neighboring suburban districts.

[brookings.edu/articles/unequal-opportunity-race-and-education/](https://www.brookings.edu/articles/unequal-opportunity-race-and-education/)

Inequities in access to higher education have contributed to a disparity in **adults earning a Bachelor's Degree (or higher)**



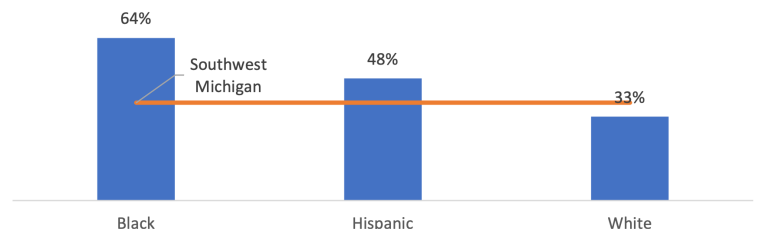
Adults with a high-school diploma only are  $3^{1/2}$  times more likely to report **living in poverty** than adults with a Bachelor's degree or higher



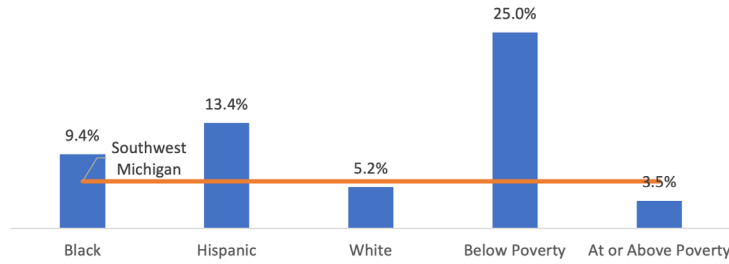
In Southwest Michigan, analysis of the actual cost of living in every county shows that 38.5% of all households do not earn enough to cover basic expenses, including housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and a basic smartphone plan. Yet for Black households, that number is much higher: 64% of Black households in Southwest Michigan are unable to afford basic household essentials in their communities. This is almost two times the rate of hardship shown for white households.

[unitedforalice.org/Michigan](http://unitedforalice.org/Michigan)

Inequities in economic opportunity, including institutional racism, have contributed to a gap in the percentage of **households living below the ALICE threshold**



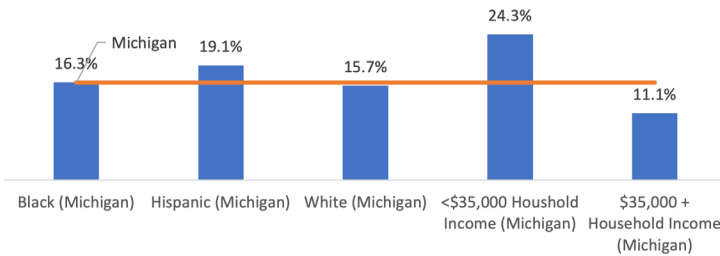
Inequities in economic opportunity, including institutional racism, have contributed to a gap in the **unemployment rate**



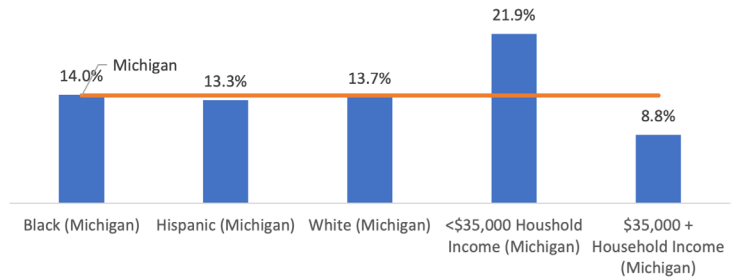
Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. SDOH can be grouped into 5 domains - economic stability, education access and quality, health care access and quality, neighborhood and built environment, and social and community context.

health.gov

Ongoing inequities across multiple structures and systems have created disparities in **adults reporting poor mental health**



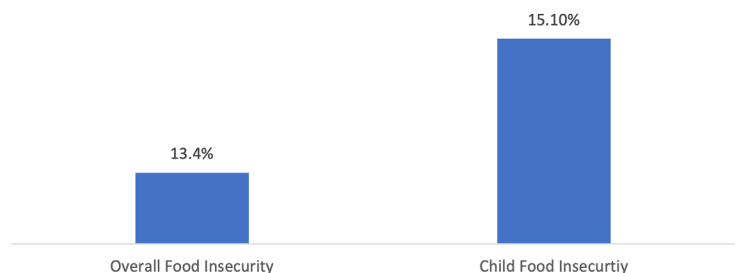
Ongoing inequities across multiple structures and systems have created disparities in **adults reporting poor physical health**



What is food insecurity? Simply put, it's having unreliable access to healthy food. Food-insecure people may live in urban neighborhoods and rural communities where healthy food is scarce. The causes of food insecurity are complex, and it can affect every aspect of life, from education and health to a child's cognitive development.

feedwm.org

**Food insecurity** affects 1 in 8 people in Southwest Michigan. **The need is even greater among children**, with 1 in 7 experiencing food insecurity





## IMPACT AGENDA FOR CHANGE QUESTIONS?

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## ECIMPACT QUESTIONS?

Email: [impact@uwsm.org](mailto:impact@uwsm.org)

[uwsm.org/agenda](http://uwsm.org/agenda)



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