Valley of the Sun United Way envisions a community where every child, family and individual is healthy, has a safe place to live and has every opportunity to succeed in school, work and life.

In 2021, we announced our MC2026 community-informed plan focused on Maricopa County, the people who live here and the belief that regular change isn’t enough. To achieve the bold community goals in the plan, we must focus on Mighty Change.

The following pages serve as an annual report and update on our community’s progress over the past year and the unique role of United Way to address these MC2026 impact areas:

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### Increase 3rd grade reading proficiency by 25%
- Baseline 2021: 43%
- Current 2022: 43%
- Goal 2023: 48%

### Increase youth aged 16-24 engaged in education and employment opportunities by 38%
- Baseline 2020: 89%
- Current 2022: 90%
- Goal 2023: 93%

### Reduce homelessness by 50%
- Baseline 2022: 9,642
- Current 2023: 4,500
- Goal 2024: 9,000

### Increase access to affordable health care by 100,000 individuals
- Baseline 2019: 85%
- Current 2021: 85%
- Goal 2023: 88%

### Increase achievement of higher paying employment by 20%
- Baseline 2021: 68%
- Current 2022: 73%
- Goal 2023: 78%

### Decrease food insecurity by 50%
- Baseline 2020: 13%
- Current 2022: 7%
- Goal 2024: 5%

**2022-2023 Highlights**

- Coalitions by MC2026 areas formalized with over 300 members
- Provided nearly 10,000 children with affordable quality child care, in partnership with First Things First
- Partnered with Read On Communities to combat pandemic-related learning loss and improve literacy skills for nearly 6,500 children through the literacy hub programming, which has included 24,000 hours of tutoring and distributed 50,000 books for children to start their own home libraries
- Launched pilot year of Pathways to Economic Opportunity with 28 young Black and Latina women in the inaugural professional development class
- MC2026 Public Policy Agenda finalized with local, state and federal priorities
- Supported distributing $350,000 worth of equipment and supplies to over 100 of our nonprofit and school partners
- Engaged over 6,000 volunteers in support of our MC2026 work
- Received a NIST Cybersecurity Framework overall risk rating of “Low,” ensuring safe stewardship of over $100MM in philanthropic and state funds

**Community Snapshot 2022-2023**

Information reported based on most current data sources available at time of publication
Education

Only 43% of third graders are proficient readers, although reading is a foundational skill for all future learning. Achieving reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a crucial milestone in a child’s academic success.

**GOAL:** Increase 3rd grade reading proficiency by **25%**

Informed by data from the Center for the Future of Arizona, Arizona Department of Education, AZMERIT results

**Baseline** (2021) **2022** **Current** (2023) **Goal**

80,000 youth aged 16 to 24 are not engaged in school or employment. These young adults are less likely to be employed, more likely to rely on government assistance and tend to have poorer health conditions.

**GOAL:** Increase youth aged 16–24 engaged in education and employment opportunities by **38%**

Informed by data from the Center for the Future of Arizona, U.S. Census Bureau, 1-year Public Use Microdata Series Person File for Arizona

United Way in Action

**STRATEGY:** United Way works with schools and nonprofit partners to build and strengthen literacy capacity in early learning environments:

- 51,072 literacy resources provided
- 12,548 individuals completed professional development activities
- 23,341 participants tutored and/or received academic assistance
- Partnered with 770 child care providers
- Nearly 10,000 children received child care scholarships through our statewide partnership with First Things First

**SPOTLIGHT** **Project C.A.L.L.**

Project C.A.L.L. is a statewide consortium working to improve literacy skills and strengthen the collaboration needed to drive efficiency and innovation that will accelerate language and literacy outcomes in underserved schools and communities.

These partnerships include relationships with Read On Communities across the Valley, such as Read On Avondale/Southwest Valley, Read On Chandler, Read On Phoenix, Read On Pima and Read On Tempe. Nearly 6,500 children have been served through newly launched literacy hub programming, which has included over 24,000 hours of tutoring and distributed 50,000 books for children to start their own home libraries.

Additionally, these partnerships are addressing chronic absenteeism with the launch of MapLIT 2.0, Arizona’s comprehensive data tool for interactive mapping and reporting on data that impact school readiness and early literacy outcomes.

**United Way’s Future Focus on Education**

We continue to monitor geographic areas of disparity among literacy and engagement rates, and make connections to literacy hubs and other supportive programming.

In addition, we will lean into partnerships that specialize in specific supportive services that keep vulnerable students not only from drifting away from achievement, but towards post-secondary achievement that will prepare them to thrive in future careers.
The growing number of people experiencing homelessness can be attributed to several compounding issues such as housing affordability and the lack of available funding for transitional and permanent supportive housing. This leaves neighbors behind and has a significant impact on health care resources, crime and safety, the workforce and the use of tax dollars.

United Way in Action

**STRATEGY:** Increase investments in services and programs that prioritize social determinants and wraparound services that prevent and address homelessness.

- **4,085** individuals provided emergency shelter
- **63** individuals moved to safe and stable housing because of a navigator/Case manager
- **3,697** referrals for permanent housing
- **3,245** utility assists

**SPOTLIGHT Project Connect**

On any given day, thousands of people experience homelessness in Maricopa County. A dire issue that continues to be at the forefront here in the Valley. Many individuals and families are experiencing homelessness for the very first time and only need some temporary assistance to get back on their feet.

In partnership with the Human Services Campus, Project Connect provides a space for people to come together and be met by dozens of nonprofits and community-based organizations at one location to increase access to programs.

Attendees are connected with a vast array of services and resources to help them tackle the issues they are facing. This includes critical service connections, such as enjoying a meal, gaining access to clean clothing, getting identification documents such as ID and social security cards or birth certificates, receiving housing or shelter placement services, wellness checks and haircuts, employment services and more.

In the past year, six Project Connect events were held in communities across the Valley, from the Human Services Campus in Phoenix to Avondale, Surprise, Tempe and beyond. Nearly 600 individuals were supported through the events and received more than 2,000 service connections.

**United Way’s Future Focus on Housing & Homelessness**

Recent studies in Maricopa County show that for every one person that exits homelessness successfully, unfortunately TWO begin to experience it. By focusing on prevention, United Way will work with partners to find cost-effective mediation that prevents individuals from experiencing homelessness, as well as increasing well-being by avoiding the associated suffering and trauma.
Health

15% of individuals lack access to affordable health care. This lack of access has a number of negative consequences. Uninsured individuals are less likely to receive preventive care and less likely to seek care as quickly when they are sick or injured. This can lead to worse health outcomes and higher costs in the long run.

**GOAL:** Increase access to affordable health care by 100,000 individuals

Informed by data from the Center for the Future of Arizona, Arizona Department of Health Services

United Way in Action

**STRATEGY:** Reduce barriers to accessing health care (transportation, social determinants, cost and lack of trust) through outreach and services that increase participation in health care programs.

8,834 individuals increased knowledge of how to overcome barriers to access to health care

6,617 transportation rides provided (medical/mental health services)

1,218 individuals enrolled for medical/mental health care benefits

**SPOTLIGHT: Community Health Workers**

Community health workers, or promotoras, are critical frontline public health professionals who have an in-depth understanding of local communities and the strategies that are most impactful in the neighborhoods in which they have built deep, trusting relationships. Community health workers play a key role in facilitating access to services and increasing knowledge, understanding and self-sufficiency with under-resourced members of our community.

Through our MC2026 Health Coalition and Action Teams, partners advocated for and successfully worked with the Arizona Department of Health Services to create a voluntary licensing program for community health workers. The Arizona Department of Health Services began licensing community health workers in November 2022.

Valley of the Sun United Way has formed several partnerships and consulted with organizations including Arizona State University, Unlimited Potential, YMCA and others to create community health worker training programs that build skills in the areas of data, canvassing, health systems and knowledge, cultural beliefs and more.

Valley of the Sun United Way currently provides funding for community health worker positions with Unlimited Potential, Helping Families in Need and notMYkid that are improving access to resources for children, families, and individuals across the Valley.

Seventy-two percent of individuals lack access to affordable health care. This lack of access has a number of negative consequences. Uninsured individuals are less likely to receive preventive care and less likely to seek care as quickly when they are sick or injured. This can lead to worse health outcomes and higher costs in the long run.

**GOAL:** Decrease food insecurity by 50%

Informed by data from Feeding America

United Way in Action

**STRATEGY:** Strengthen and support the emergency food system to reduce hunger among families and senior citizens.

453,597 individuals received emergency food

23,531,430 meals supplied to individuals

291,483 home-delivered meals

**GOAL:** Decrease food insecurity by 50%

Informed by data from Feeding America

United Way’s Future Focus on Health

584,600 individuals in Maricopa County experience food insecurity, a condition in which people lack reliable access to affordable, nutritious food. Food insecurity can have a significant impact on physical and mental health, academic performance and financial stability. It can also force people to make difficult choices between food, rent and other essential needs.

Food deserts and higher food costs are preventing families from accessing affordable, healthy food. We will partner to lift up solutions to increase access in these geographically specific areas.

We will partner with community health workers and nonprofits to deliver culturally competent outreach and services that help remove barriers to accessing health care (i.e. transportation, costs and lack of trust). Monitoring closely how the end of the auto enrollments for SNAP and AHCCCS will impact access to vital support, we will increase outreach efforts where most needed.
Workforce Development

33% of individuals in Maricopa County are employed in low-wage jobs, earning wages too low to meet their basic needs. As a result, they may rely on public assistance programs and lack access to affordable health care.

**GOAL:** Increase achievement of higher paying employment by 20%


United Way in Action

**STRATEGY:** Increase resources to help individuals obtain job opportunities that will raise their income and create sustainable careers.

- 3,210 individuals completed certification/licensing requirements for employment
- 6,698 individuals completed a job training/workshop program
- 10,844 individuals/families increased income

**SPOTLIGHT Pathways to Economic Opportunity**

Early work experiences help youth gain skills and build networks that lead to prosperous careers. Unfortunately, many young Black and Latina women often don’t have access to these same opportunities, creating a significant wealth gap and making it nearly impossible to be on an equal footing when entering the workforce.

To advance the economic progress of Black and Latina young women in Maricopa County, Valley of the Sun United Way brought together several nonprofit partners to launch a new workforce development program called Pathways to Economic Opportunity to support young Black and Latina women in the Phoenix area with resources to close the wealth gap by providing mentorship, internships/apprenticeships, job-skills training, financial literacy workshops and more.

In its debut year, Pathways to Economic Opportunity supported 28 women in the program. In addition to matching participants with relevant mentors, speaker series workshops were held on topics that included networking, empowerment and establishing a personal brand, and two financial literacy workshops were provided. Six corporate partnerships were also secured to assist with career placement opportunities, and participants were supported with tuition/class/exam fees for job-skills training, textbooks and supplies, professional attire, transportation, technology and more.

United Way’s Future Focus on Workforce Development

We will continue to focus on our education partnerships that support opportunity youth and the needed resources for their path to post-secondary attainment.

51% of Maricopa County residents lack the skills and training necessary to secure living-wage jobs. Postsecondary education is a required first step for many in-demand and growing jobs, such as teachers, nurses, doctors and engineers. A postsecondary degree provides access to better-paying jobs with more opportunities for advancement.

**GOAL:** Increase preparation for a living wage job by 33%

Informed by data from Expect More Arizona, U.S. Census Bureau, 1-year Public Use Microdata Series Person File for Arizona

United Way in Action

**STRATEGY:** Connect business and education to increase opportunities to work-based learning, apprenticeship and mentoring experiences.

- 549 individuals completed internships and apprenticeships
- 1,314 individuals received one-on-one mentoring
- 2,443 individuals completed a two-year or four-year degree program

**Baseline (2019)**

- 49%

**Current (2021)**

- 51%

**Goal**

- 68%

**Baseline (2021)**

**Current (2022)**

**Goal**

- 75%

- 75%

- 75%

Informed by data from Expect More Arizona, U.S. Census Bureau, 1-year Public Use Microdata Series Person File for Arizona

**Baseline (2021)**

**Current (2022)**

**Goal**

- 68%

- 72%

- 75%

**Baseline (2021)**

**Current (2022)**

**Goal**

- 68%

- 72%

- 75%

**Baseline (2021)**

**Current (2022)**

**Goal**

- 68%

- 72%

- 75%

United Way in Action

**United Way’s Future Focus on Workforce Development**

We will continue to focus on our education partnerships that support opportunity youth and the needed resources for their path to post-secondary attainment.

We also know people need jobs now, so we are working with certification and licensing programs to ensure people are gainfully employed today.

Finally, we will help to clear barriers to employment, especially fair chance hiring services for those re-entering the workforce following incarceration.
2022-2023 Financials

TOTAL INVESTMENTS TO IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY

$107,442,255

92% of Total Investments go to Strategic Community Programs that Support MC2026 Goals

Our Programs Support:

Support of 2-1-1 to ensure people are connected to the services they need
Gifts-in-kind

EDUCATION

Access to affordable quality child care and early education in partnership with First Things First
Quality afterschool and out-of-school time programs so parents can work
At-home learning materials, programs and tutoring to help kids read at grade level

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

Emergency shelters
Support services for individuals living in transitional, emergency or permanent support housing

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Initiatives to guide high school students to graduation, college and career
Supportive services for upskilling

HEALTH

Emergency meals
Food delivery for seniors
Filling meal gaps for students
Reducing barriers to healthcare access (i.e. transportation, trust, benefit enrollment)

GRASSROOTS PARTNERSHIPS

Capacity building support for small nonprofit organizations

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We are proud that Valley of the Sun United Way’s infrastructure costs to support our MC2026 impact in the community and service to our corporate partners and donors is 8% of our total annual budget.
Thank you for creating Mighty Change in Maricopa County.

Creating Mighty Change is so much greater than any one person or organization. It takes an entire community. Our Mighty Change Champions are some of our community’s biggest supporters that are making a positive impact through corporate philanthropy, employee giving and volunteerism.

Thank you to our Million Dollar Corporate Circle and Top 50 partners for your generous support.

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Creating **Mighty Change** in

**HEALTH | HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS | EDUCATION | WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**