

MIC 2026

A plan for

Mighty

Change

in Maricopa
County

Valley of the Sun
United Way



Together, we will be a **FORCE** for

Mighty Change

There's never been a moment like now. Now is our **opportunity** to band together and fight for a **MORE EQUITABLE FUTURE.** To **kick down old barriers** and **champion new ways** of thinking. We need to **STAND UP** for those who have been overlooked for too long. We need to say, "**not on my watch.**" Because quietly doing good is no longer good enough. It's time to be **BOLD AND LOUD.** It's time for each of us to be a **FORCE FOR CHANGE.** Our mission isn't small or easy. It's a **giant leap.** A **Mighty Change.** But this community was made to be mighty. And this is our **TIME TO PROVE IT.**

Our Aspirations

We can't beat today's issues with yesterday's thinking. Change demands bold new solutions. So, we're redeploying our energies and realigning our resources and partners to drive Mighty Change in our community. Together, we tackle the systemic, interrelated issues that are holding us back to create more opportunity and access throughout the Valley. Progress will be tracked and reported annually, and we will change courses as needed to stay focused on the right programs and solutions to reach our goals. Here's where we're focusing our efforts.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Health

Housing
and
Homelessness

Education

Workforce
Development

ADVOCACY, PUBLIC POLICY, AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

HEALTH

Remove barriers to ensure everyone in our community is healthy, with a focus on access to food and healthcare.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Ensure all can have a safe home to call their own.

EDUCATION

Close opportunity gaps to ensure children read at grade level by 3rd grade and youth are prepared for educational success and employment.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Open pathways to better paying jobs.



Decrease
food insecurity by
50% by 2026

Increase access to
affordable healthcare by
100,000
individuals **by 2026**



Health Action Plan

MIGHTY GOALS

1. Decrease food insecurity by 50% by 2026
2. Increase access to affordable healthcare by 100,000 individuals by 2026

SHORT TERM GOALS

Food Access

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

Comprehensive Healthcare Access (Physical, Mental, Behavioral)

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

LONG TERM GOALS

Food Access

Increase nutrition education in low-income and marginalized communities to reduce chronic health outcomes:

- ↓ Decrease those with diabetes from 10.8% to 5% by 2026
- ↓ Decrease those with hypertension from 30.7% to 25% by 2026

Comprehensive Healthcare Access (Physical, Mental, Behavioral)

Create public awareness campaigns to build advocates for policy and regulation changes that remove access barriers for low-income communities, communities of color, and vulnerable communities.

Health Action Plan

STRATEGIES

Advocacy and Public Policy

- ↓ Lower the cost of healthcare
- ↑ Increase access points for healthcare
- ↑ Increase access to mental health services

Prioritized Communities

- Home-bound seniors and households in the Northwest Valley facing food insecurity
- Food desert communities in West Phoenix and South Phoenix along the I-17 and S-60 corridors
- High health disparity communities in West Valley, downtown Phoenix, South Phoenix and rural Maricopa County

Diversity, Equity, Access and Inclusion

- Engage with communities of color and other vulnerable communities for coordinated and effective impact

VSUW's Role

- Partner with health providers and community-based organizations that help increase access and availability of health services and insurance
- Immediately partner with nonprofits and community-based organizations to increase access to vulnerable populations so they increase health outcomes, beginning with COVID-19 vaccine efforts
- Support expansion of enrollment efforts for health programs including AHCCCS and SNAP through program support and public awareness

**Housing and
Homelessness**

MIGHTY GOALS



Reduce
homelessness
by **50%**
by **2026**

MIGHTY GOALS
CHANGE

Housing and Homelessness Action Plan

MIGHTY GOALS

1. Reduce homelessness by 50% by 2026

SHORT TERM GOALS

Housing

Increase investments in services and programs that prioritize social determinants and wraparound services that prevent and assist those experiencing homelessness.

Services/Programs

Decrease individual and family housing insecurity through targeted investments in rent/utility assistance, housing navigators, and eviction prevention.

Shelter

Support the emergency shelter system by investing in individual and family shelters that move households out of crisis.

Overlap with Health

Demonstrate regional leadership through collaboration to advance housing and homeless services.

LONG TERM GOALS

Housing

Collaborate with regional leaders to develop new affordable housing in Maricopa County.

Services/Programs

Improve systems with housing and homeless services to reduce barriers to entry for communities of color and other vulnerable communities.

Partner with regional organizations to develop new metrics that capture county-wide vulnerability of people facing eviction or in need of rent/utility assistance.

Shelter

Collaborate with regional leaders to build a more equitable shelter system that reflects our population size.

Overlap with Health

Change perception of homelessness from a public safety issue to a public health issue with a new public awareness campaign.

Housing and Homelessness Action Plan

STRATEGIES

Advocacy and Public Policy

- ↑ Increase number of affordable housing units
- ↑ Increase permanent support for housing units and support services that assist those with vouchers living in private market apartments/units
- ↑ Increase regional shelter options
- Change regulations for easier access and coordination of supportive services

Prioritized Communities

- Anyone on the verge of experiencing homelessness due to the COVID-19 recession
- Anyone currently experiencing homelessness in downtown Phoenix

Diversity, Equity, Access and Inclusion

- Use data and storytelling to show how racism creates barriers to housing access
 - 27% of individuals experiencing homelessness are Black but only 6% of the county population is Black

VSUW's Role

- Serve as a grant-maker to nonprofits that place specific focus on critical wraparound services that keep families and individuals housed
- Collaborate with Continuum of Care, government partners, and community-based organizations to develop new regional plans to end homelessness
- Educate community on the connection between housing security and improved health outcomes



Increase 3rd grade
reading proficiency

by **25%**
by **2026**



Increase youth aged
16–24 engaged in
education and employment
opportunities by

38% by **2026**

Education Action Plan

MIGHTY GOALS

1. Increase 3rd grade reading proficiency by 25% by 2026
2. Increase youth aged 16-24 engaged in education and employment opportunities by 38% by 2026

SHORT TERM GOALS

Early Education and Reading

Build and strengthen literacy capacity of practitioners in early learning environments by 2022.

Parent and Family Support

Increase online learning and socio-emotional supportive services for parents, caregivers, and teachers by 2022.

Overlap with Health and Workforce

Increase knowledge and access to basic family needs and supportive services by 2022 through grant funding and school-based hubs or community schools model.

LONG TERM GOALS

Early Education and Reading

Leverage support resources to increase 3rd grade reading proficiency rates from 48% to 60% by 2026.

Parent and Family Support

Increase access to family resources by partnering with schools to increase knowledge and access to services by 2026.

Overlap with Health and Workforce

Increase knowledge and resources to families and education staff to support student engagement in school and life by 2026.

Education Action Plan

STRATEGIES

Advocacy and Public Policy

- ↑ Increase teacher pay
- ↑ Create higher quality access for all with additional funding for underfunded, underperforming and under-resourced schools
- Use state funding to support the community schools model
- Make all-day kindergarten and preschool more accessible

Prioritized Communities

- Title I Schools in West Valley and South Phoenix


Diversity, Equity, Access and Inclusion

- Ensure the education workforce (teachers, school board, administrators) reflects the diversity of the population
 - 46% of preschool through 12th grade students are Latino, but only 13% of administrators and school board and 16% of the teaching workforce are Latino

VSUW's Role

- Grant-making with nonprofit, school organizations and community providers that specialize in specific supportive services that keep vulnerable students from drifting too far away from achievement
- Convening and serving as a backbone organization around strategic reading initiatives
- Partner with corporate partners and donors to leverage funds to bridge Digital Divides

Increase preparation
of individuals for a **living
wage job** by **33%**
by 2026



Increase 
achievement of **higher
paying employment**
by **20%** by 2026

Workforce Development Action Plan

MIGHTY GOALS

1. Increase preparation of individuals for a living wage job by 33% by 2026
2. Increase achievement of higher paying employment by 20% by 2026

SHORT TERM GOALS

Access to Jobs

Increase resources to help individuals obtain job opportunities that will raise their income and create sustainable careers by 2023.

Overlap with Education

Connect business and education to increase opportunities to work-based learning, apprenticeship and mentoring experiences by 2023.

LONG TERM GOALS

Access to Jobs

Work with partner employers, Valley businesses associations, education institutions, and other partners to develop long-term strategies and metrics that will increase the number of workers with high paying in-demand jobs from 44% to 53% by 2026.

Workforce Development Action Plan

STRATEGIES

Advocacy and Public Policy

- Advocate for livable wages
- ↑ Increase job opportunities for ex-offenders
- Partner with business and organizations in the community to develop new talent pipeline opportunities

Prioritized Communities

- Immediate opportunities include women of color in the service sector who have children at home

Diversity, Equity, Access and Inclusion

- Immediate and long-term opportunities to expose all students to future career choices and opportunities

VSUW's Role

- Convene education, government, and CBO sectors to co-create new strategies and opportunities for highly-desired jobs
- Serve as a grant-maker to nonprofits and community-based organizations that support unemployed and/or underemployed individuals to get a paying job that can support themselves and their families
- Co-create new strategies that can lead to supporting programs that help individuals have opportunities to participate in hands-on work-based learning, apprenticeship, and mentoring experiences

Be a **FORCE** for

Mighty Change WITH US

**Even small actions add up to make a big difference.
Here are a few ways to get involved now.**

GET READING

- ✓ *"Map the Meal Gap"* Interactive Study by Feeding America
 - [Map](#)
 - [Research Study](#)
- ✓ *"Hunger into Health"* by Erik Talkin
- ✓ *"Evicted"* by Matthew Desmond
- ✓ *"The Color of Law"* by Richard Rothstein
- ✓ *"Hand to Mouth: Living in Bootstrap America"* by Linda Tirado

GET DOING

- ✓ [Volunteer at a COVID-19 Vaccination Site](#)
- ✓ [Donate business attire to St. Joseph the Worker](#)
- ✓ [Participate in a local ReadOn Community](#)
- ✓ [Ask Arizona legislators to increase the Charitable Tax Deduction by supporting HB2113](#)
- ✓ [Help at a food bank](#)

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