



United Way for
Greater Austin

IMPACT REPORT

July 2021–June 2022



OUR MISSION

United Way for Greater Austin brings people, ideas, and resources together to fight poverty in our community.

OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Race impacts all of us. It's the single biggest predictor of a person's education, health, and income. To advance United Way for Greater Austin's mission to fight poverty, we must stand up for racial justice.

THAT'S WHY WE COMMIT TO:

- Looking back to understand how we've contributed to racial inequality
- Changing unfair systems that prevent our community from reaching its full potential
- Embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion as individuals, as an organization, and with our community

United, we can create a community where everyone feels a sense of belonging. Join the journey and Live United!



Message from
CEO David C. Smith

Thanks to you and so many generous supporters, in the last year United Way for Greater Austin has grown proven programs and started innovative pilot initiatives that are already yielding exciting results in the way of families having the opportunities and resources for a better life.

We also grew our footprint when we joined forces and merged with United Way of Williamson County. This merger allows us to expand our impact and address our region's biggest challenges more effectively. We already have some amazing examples of our increased impact in Wilco: One that stands out is our Addressing Cancer Together (ACT) initiative, where we are able to pay for breast cancer screening and treatment for uninsured women living in poverty. ACT is already saving lives, keeping families intact without the financial burden that normally accompanies a major illness.

Through all of our work, equity is at the heart of our efforts to ensure that our community is a place where everyone has the chance to reach their full potential. This report could be a hundred pages long if we captured all of the work we are doing in our focus areas of education, health, and financial stability. We are always here for our neighbors who need us most, the thousands who are working hard through ongoing tough times, and having to make decisions no one should have to make.

All of our work is possible only because of you and our overwhelmingly generous community. We still have work to do, and there are thousands more who need us. Please spread the word and join our movement to create the beloved community where the promise of our great region is available to all. Our deepest thanks.

David C. Smith

Local moms at a parenting class hosted by United Way community partner Todos Juntos



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Where Your Dollars Go

Together with generous neighbors like you, here are some of the things we accomplished in the past year across the Central Texas region.



672

families supported with 2-Gen approaches, serving parents and children simultaneously which leads to better financial outcomes for both generations

87%

of clients are earning higher incomes after programming



\$4,887,620

invested directly into our local community, including \$2,057,470 in Community Investment Grants and \$2,591,650 in other grants throughout the year



Leveraged over \$339,079 in state funding to directly support centers in our Pre-K Partnerships program, a collaboration with Austin ISD



107 students served



91% of students were developmentally on track for literacy at the end of the school year (up from 63% at the start of the school year)



888

families with newborns supported with a Family Connects visit

97%

of families had at least one risk addressed during the visit



Engaged 160 organizations and 567 stakeholders through the **Success By 6 Coalitions** in Travis and Williamson counties

Engaged 107 organizations and 240 stakeholders through the **2-Gen Coalition**

Engaged 40 organizations and 68 stakeholders through the **Greater Austin Reading Coalition**

Collaborated with 151 companies to evaluate, expand, and improve family-friendly practices and policies

Partnered with 15,504 donors and hundreds of corporate partners to fight poverty

853

volunteers mobilized to connect with our community

5,701 volunteer hours

\$170,744 value of volunteer time

254,387

requests for help answered through our Navigation Center



50% increase from the previous year



Collaborated with 19 local grassroots organizations to administer more than 20,000 vaccines

Put over

50,000

books in the hands of young readers



52,893

children and individuals impacted through our strategic work in education, health, and financial stability



Young girl on the playground at Trinity Child Development Center in East Austin

SPOTLIGHT

Early Childhood Education

IN AUSTIN/
TRAVIS COUNTY

The first 2,000 days of every person's life are foundational. Studies show that a child's experiences during those early years literally build the architecture of their brain.

IN FACT

90%

of the brain develops before age five.



Every \$1 invested in early childhood results in a \$9 return on investment.



Early childhood education lays the groundwork for early development, academic achievement, economic productivity, and a lifetime of better health. That's why United Way unites the community around this common goal: All children enter Kindergarten happy, healthy, and prepared to succeed in school and beyond. Together with our **Success By 6 Coalition** partners, here are some ways we advanced that goal in the past year.

Improved access to high-quality child care and increased support for home-based child care

For the first time, **71% of children under six** from families with low income are enrolled in high-quality early education settings, surpassing our goal of 70%.

In addition, we launched new efforts to support **home-based child care** with unique resources to improve capacity and quality in

settings where many families with low income seek and find care.

At United Way, we believe advocacy is critical, not just to further the impact of our work, but to create lasting systemic change. Here are a few major advocacy wins we're excited to share and celebrate with you.

Increased public funding

The City of Austin and Travis County prioritized spending on early childhood development and, as a result, **investment in learning increased by \$8 per child**. Since 2017, local investments in early childhood have increased by a total of \$84 per child, not including COVID-19 relief funds.

The City and County have collectively committed **\$15.1 million in ARPA funds** for the early childhood ecosystem in Austin over the next three years. This marks a turning point in Austin identifying early childhood systems as essential

to our economic infrastructure. ARPA funds are now being allocated to address the gaps in early child care, increasing access for families.

These are indicators that the Success By 6 Coalition's work to highlight the importance of the early childhood period on lifelong health and our community's economic future is resonating. The Success By 6 Coalition is convened by United Way to advance our mission to fight poverty.

Local employers adopt family-friendly policies

Powered by United Way and E3 Alliance, Early Matters Greater Austin (EMGA) is an alliance of current and retired business professionals focused on the critical relationship between access to high-quality early education and our State's long-term economic success. A significant aspect of the group's work—known as **Best Place for Working Parents®**—is advocating for family-friendly workplace practices that are research-proven to benefit families and have a positive impact on profitability. The EMGA Steering Committee's advocacy for Travis County **expanding family-friendly policies** for their 5,000+ employees is an example of that work.

On May 3, 2022, the Travis County Commissioners Court unanimously voted to offer Travis County employees eight weeks of paid parental leave. The resolution was sponsored by Travis County Judge Andy Brown and Precinct 1 Travis County Commissioner Jeffrey Travillion, and advocated for by the Early Matters Greater Austin Steering Committee.

Model Community, ConnectATX, and 2-1-1

Q&A

MEET
SUSAN MARTINEZ,
2-1-1 NAVIGATION
SPECIALIST

What is your favorite thing about working with 2-1-1? I really, really enjoy talking to Texans all over the state, and knowing that I can help them—that's pretty awesome. On a day-to-day basis, we take hundreds of calls, so it's great to know that I'm able to help them find a resource, help them find a way to get their rent paid, or find a food pantry.

Why is 2-1-1 important for our community? There's a real disparity in wealth here that's getting bigger and bigger. It's becoming more and more apparent. We've all got to step up to the plate and do what we can to close that gap, so that regular blue-collar working people can still have a chance at a decent life.

Accessing social services has never been easy. There are countless barriers to getting help: structural racism, language barriers, the digital divide, lack of transportation, complicated application processes, long wait lists, a limited social service capacity, and more. United Way works toward eliminating these barriers and ensuring that every person in our community gets the help they need.

Did you know that only 10% of a person's health outcomes are related to health care? Factors related to social services, like access to education and housing, can have the biggest impact. That's why United Way unites the community around this common goal: People in our community are connected to resources for food, health, housing, transportation, and more.

Meet Model Community

Funded by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, Episcopal Health Foundation, St. David's Foundation, and Travis County Health and Human Services, Model Community allows service providers—from health clinics to schools and community-based organizations—to develop a comprehensive view of an individual's needs

and coordinate support to improve their health and wellness outcomes. Through partnerships, Model Community is building a more effective, person-centered system of social services—so everyone in our community has the opportunity to be healthy and thrive, organizations can more effectively serve clients, and the community achieves equitable health and wellness outcomes. United Way provides the backbone support for our many Model Community partners as part of our collective impact work to fight poverty.

Simple, one-call access to resources

For more than 25 years, United Way has helped people navigate the complex system of health and human services in Central Texas through our Navigation Center. We provide simple, one-call access to more than 30,000 nonprofit and government resources in 10 counties. Callers can receive support in the areas of food, health, child care, employment, housing, transportation, disaster relief, and more.



Our ConnectATX team poses next to a bus promoting the service, thanks to a partnership with CapMetro

2-1-1	ConnectATX
<p>A phone number anyone can call for help with food, health, child care, employment, housing, transportation, disaster relief, and more. 2-1-1 is free, confidential, and available 24/7. Support is available in more than 200 languages.</p>	<p>A complement to 2-1-1 that goes deeper to proactively and holistically address many needs. Help is available online and via phone, text, email, and chat.</p>
<p>254,387 requests for help answered through our Navigation Center</p>	<p>110,000 searches conducted on ConnectATX</p>
<p>50% increase from the previous year</p>	<p>Most Searched Needs Housing Financial Assistance Food Transportation Baby Supplies</p>
<p>Top Needs Housing Health Care Utility Assistance Food Mental Health/ Substance Use</p>	<p>Closed-loop referrals A key feature of ConnectATX is "closed-loop" referrals. This allows us to digitally send client information, with their consent, to service providers, see if a client is served, and follow up as needed. This was our first full year of promoting and building closed-loop partnerships.</p>
	<p>Over 80 established partnerships with organizations using ConnectATX to send or receive referrals for community members</p>
	<p>Over 9,000 referrals were sent through the platform, 3,500 of which were directly to closed-loop partners</p>
	<p>Partners updated nearly 75% of the received referrals, with over 50% being fully closed</p>
	<p>Over 1,400 registered users</p>
	<p>Over 9,000 referrals placed on the platform</p>
	<p>Over 1,000 of the referrals resulted in the individual receiving help</p>

Our Impact in Williamson County

BY THE NUMBERS

Engagement with our Wilco Success By 6 Coalition

23
organizations

3
parents with lived experience

4
additional community leaders

In January 2022, United Way for Greater Austin and United Way of Williamson County joined forces and merged.

This merger expands United Way's mission and impact with a regional approach, and helps us better and more efficiently serve a broader community across Greater Austin and Williamson County. **In short, it means more people right here in our community will get the help they need.**

United, we can do more. Here are just a few examples of our work in Williamson County in action.

Supporting young children and their families

Building on our success in improving early childhood education in Austin/Travis County, we are convening a network of child and family advocates from across Williamson County to ensure every child gets the best start possible. Together with our Wilco Success By 6 Coalition, we are creating an action plan

that supports the healthy growth of children ages 0-5, during a foundational period of brain development. Today's children are tomorrow's neighbors, workers, and leaders, and this effort will help our youngest community members in Williamson County reach their full potential.

In the 2022-23 school year, we are partnering with Round Rock Independent School District to launch a new pre-K program serving 3-year-olds. This Pre-K Partnerships program will expand access to high-quality pre-K and support child development centers to improve and sustain quality services for children.

Funding nonprofits doing great work

We are on a mission to fight poverty, and we know we are not in this fight alone. We are continuing to invest

in dozens of Williamson County nonprofit partners aligned with our mission—to amplify our collective impact. Our Community Investment Grants are made possible by the donations of thousands of community investors each year, and we are committed to serving as a strategic steward of these community dollars.

In June, we announced a total of \$2.2 million in strategic grants to 68 nonprofits in our region. Of that total, \$450,000 is going to 38 nonprofits in Williamson County working in our focus areas of education, health, and financial stability.

Supporting the health of our community and everyone in it

To better connect our community to affordable healthcare and improve health outcomes, we are building a network of community health workers in Williamson County to serve individuals and families with low income. The Pathways Community HUB Project will reduce overall costs to providers while also improving the quality of health for our community members.

Residents participate in an activity at AGE, a United Way community partner in Williamson County





Since launching in January 2021, the Greater Austin Reading Coalition has gotten over 50,000 books (and counting!) into the hands of young readers.

A “Rawr-some” Literacy Night with the Greater Austin Reading Coalition

In April, more than 200 children and families gathered for the Greater Austin Reading Coalition's first-ever Family

Literacy Night at Sanchez Elementary School with coalition member Communities in Schools. Hosting family literacy nights and distributing culturally-relevant books are critical parts of the coalition's work to ensure that all children are reading on grade level by the fourth grade.

Students who are reading on grade level by fourth grade

are four times more likely to graduate from high school.

At the literacy night, students had a blast getting their faces painted, picking out a book to take home, listening to a monster-themed storytime, and letting out their best monster roar! At the end of the event, they received a backpack filled with school supplies courtesy of Deloitte.

Additionally, parents and caretakers were provided with resources to support their children's reading development, including a Guilt-Free Reading Calendar. It was a “rawr-some” night!

The Greater Austin Reading Coalition is convened by United Way as part of our collective impact work to fight poverty. Since launching in

January 2021, the coalition has gotten over 50,000 books (and counting!) into the hands of young readers.

Parenting Students Project supports parents with guaranteed income

Austin nursing student and mother of two, Deja, was working hard to complete her degree, but still struggled to make ends meet while staying focused on her rigorous program. That all changed when she began participating in United Way's Parenting Students Project.

A partnership between United Way and Austin Community College, the Parenting Students Project supports parenting students, ages 18-29, with financial incentives and wrap-around support to help them complete post-secondary education. The pilot was made possible by Annie E. Casey Foundation's Expanding Opportunities for Young Families initiative, and is also supported by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas and American Rescue Plan Act funds from the City of Austin.

Students who are enrolled earn a guaranteed income stipend of up to \$6,000 per year and also have access to child care scholarships, emergency cash assistance, a peer community, advising, tutoring, and other vital services.

Deja was one of the first students to participate in the program.

“This program has been extremely helpful for my family

and I,” Deja said. “It allows me to focus all of my attention on nursing school and make sure I stay on track and graduate.”

Deja spends around 20 to 30 hours outside of school on her studies. Rather than having to work a part-time job on the side, her monthly stipend from the program allows her to spend her free time with her kids.

“I'm not constantly worrying about money to pay for bills and take care of my kids,” she said. “I am able to

it. Alongside our partner Foundation Communities, United Way is helping thousands of local families take advantage of this credit and reducing hesitation around tax filing through PACES.

PACES, Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences through Collaboration and Economic Supports, focuses on helping eligible families access two tax credits: the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC). The EITC increases families' overall

“This program has been extremely helpful for my family and I. It allows me to focus all of my attention on nursing school and make sure I stay on track and graduate.”

spend extra time with them instead of [working] a part-time job, and I'm able to buy them gifts to show how much I appreciate them.”

PACES helps nearly 11,000 local families access life-changing tax credits

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is the largest federal anti-poverty program in the country, yet one in five eligible families with low income in our community are not receiving

income, and the CTC offers up to \$3,600 per child – which can be life-changing.

By improving financial stability for families with low income, we can reduce the risk of potentially traumatic childhood experiences, which are strongly linked to poverty and can have repercussions into adulthood.

This past tax season, PACES connected nearly 11,000 people to free tax preparation services, returning a total of \$24.1 million to families in the Greater Austin area.

Join Us, AND LIVE UNITED

You can make a difference. United, we can build a community where every child enters Kindergarten ready to learn, every child reads on grade level, every person connects with community resources promoting health, and all families are financially stable. Join our movement today.



Give

When you donate to United Way, your dollars stay here to make a real and lasting impact for people in the Greater Austin community. Every dollar makes a difference.



unitedwayaustin.org/give

"You will find that joy in giving just even a little bit, and you'll find that the money that you give to United Way makes a huge difference."

—Newton Wong, Tocqueville United Co-Chair

Advocate

Your voice matters. By bringing together the community to support evidence-based policy aligned with our strategic work, we are building a region that works for everyone. Join thousands of our supporters in sharing your voice and watch real change happen.



unitedwayaustin.org/advocate

"When we advocate at a deeper level and with a common voice, we become a more powerful philanthropic force."

—Tracy Fielder, Women United Executive Committee

Volunteer

As an individual or as a team, you can use your time to create real social change while connecting with your community. We bring together a network of volunteers across the Greater Austin area, providing opportunities to meet your neighbors who are passionate about giving back.



unitedwayaustin.org/volunteer

"I think it's really important for people across our community to care about the poverty that exists in our community. Because when we all succeed, our city can continue to thrive and grow."

—Laura Hernandez Holmes, Resource Development Committee



Members of Emerging Leaders at a networking event at Ani's Day & Night

JOIN A DONOR NETWORK.

Donor networks connect people who are passionate about doing good in their community through philanthropy, volunteerism, and advocacy.



unitedwayaustin.org/donor-networks

Emerging Leaders

A group of tomorrow's leaders with a passion for philanthropy, advocacy, volunteerism, and community. Join by donating \$250 annually (\$21/month) or more.

Emerging Leaders Executive Committee Chair
Arielle Sadler, Texas Mutual Insurance Company

Leaders United

Community leaders creating greater opportunity for local children and families. Join by donating \$1,000 or more annually.

Women United

A vibrant and powerful female-driven philanthropic force supporting United Way's mission to fight poverty across Central Texas. Join by donating \$1,200 annually (\$100/month) or more.

Women United Executive Committee Co-Chairs
Leshia Hoot, NI
Erika Laughlin, Deloitte

Tocqueville United

A group of local philanthropic leaders passionate about tackling the most pressing challenges in Greater Austin. Join by donating \$10,000 or more annually.

Co-Chairs
Mollie Duckworth, Latham & Watkins
Newton Wong, Deloitte

Our CORPORATE PARTNERS LIVE UNITED

United Way partners with hundreds of businesses to amplify their impact in our community—and we've been doing it for nearly 100 years. Thank you to our corporate partners below for supporting our fight against poverty and helping us build our metro area into a community that works for everyone.

Mission \$100,000+



Unite \$50,000+



Transform \$25,000+



Thrive \$10,000+



Premier Event Sponsors



Media Partners



Thank you, PARTNERS!



We're proud to partner with



Young boys and girls at literacy night hosted by the Greater Austin Reading Coalition, convened by United Way

Funding partners



Thank you, COMMITTEE MEMBERS!

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**Thank you to the
thousands of donors,
advocates, and
volunteers who make
this impact possible.**



Join us and Live United.

unitedwayaustin.org/get-involved