Unleashing the Potential of Greater Chicago... Neighborhood by Neighborhood.

We Chicagans—across the city and throughout the suburbs—have great love for our neighborhoods. There is plenty to celebrate and we have many reasons to be proud. However, there are serious issues impacting our region. Social, political, economic, racial and cultural forces have long influenced which of our region’s residents and neighborhoods have the greatest chance to succeed. Ensuring that all neighborhoods are thriving is critical to the long-term economic success of the entire region.

Now is the time for transformation. This is our home. Real change doesn’t happen overnight and it doesn’t happen alone. Together, we can connect people to healthcare and advance educational outcomes. In collaboration, we can help families become more financially stable and keep people safe from crisis. United, we can build stronger neighborhoods across the greater Chicago region. Will you join us?

DEAR SUPPORTERS,

Every success is the result of a smart plan coupled with the right people to make it happen. In this impact report you will meet the people we serve and understand the incredible work that our agency partners do every day. You will also discover how United Way’s unique approach to outcomes-based investment, community collaboration, and boots on the ground drive impact and helps individuals, families and neighborhoods thrive.

Strong households, family well-being, neighborhood stability and regional strength are inextricably linked. United Way—as the largest private funder of human services in Illinois—embraces its preeminent role in assisting neighbors who are in crisis and in helping communities regain their ground and prosper. No other organization offers the leadership, expertise and broad reach that we do. In response, we have just launched a new community impact plan, Stronger Neighborhoods for a Stronger Chicago Region. Based on current community trends, challenges and opportunities, this plan calls for a comprehensive, strategic and unrelenting drive—bringing together resources for neighborhood leaders, residents, and organizations—to create better communities for us all. A vital component of our Strong Neighborhoods plan is our Neighborhood Network Initiative, which is now operating in six city and four suburban neighborhoods. This resident led, coordinated approach leverages United Way’s expertise and convening power to organize community stakeholders to work towards a measurable goals.

You, as a supporter of our work, are a key member of our team. With United Way even more deeply embedded in communities, you play a critical role in our work, supporting people who are best equipped and most dedicated to creating positive change in their neighborhoods. Thank you for your continued collaboration with us. We have done so much, and we have so much more to do.

SINCERELY,

Wendy L. Duboe
President and Chief Executive Officer

Pat Canning
Chair, Board of Directors
Every parent wants their child to grow up to be happy and healthy. That’s why when Juan and Isabella noticed that their 14 month old daughter Julissa wasn’t crawling or saying simple words, they went to the Children’s Center of Cicero-Berwyn (CCCB), an agency partner of United Way of Metro Chicago, for help. The team at CCCB screened Julissa and confirmed that she had developmental delays, particularly with speech and motor skills.

In addition to beginning weekly at-home speech therapy through an Early Intervention Agency, Juan and Julissa began regularly attending the Toddler Yoga and Play with Purpose classes at CCCB. Through the classes, Julissa quickly learned how to crawl and soon was walking using the walking ladders available at the center. Juan was amazed at the progress Julissa was making and realized that they had unintentionally been hindering their daughter’s development by limiting her activities. CCCB provided Juan and Isabella with the tools and strategies they needed to facilitate activities at home to continue Julissa’s growth.

The whole family started attending the center’s weekly family night events, where they were able to form connections with other families in their community. CCCB also connected them with additional resources, such as eye and dental care, ESL classes, SNAP and utility support.

Today, Julissa has reached all of her developmental milestones and is on track to attend preschool. Additionally, the rest of the family was able to gain access to resources and support that they needed to live healthier lives.

United Way of Metro Chicago partners with best-in-class agencies and empowers them to work together—improving household outcomes and helping neighborhoods thrive.
We see the child’s development, the family connections, families becoming a community, and our staff helping to make parenting a little easier. Through this, the children are successful at school and at home. The parents are more involved in their child’s emotional and academic learning. This is what we strive for.

—CHILDREN’S CENTER OF CICERO-BERWYN

Whether it’s helping people navigate health insurance and find a primary care physician, supporting a community garden or nutrition program, or ensuring mental health services are available and attainable, we fight for access to health care and preventive programs for every person in every neighborhood across the region.

Through our investment strategy we’ll help 200,000 individuals improve their health each year.

16

Chicago residents in areas of high economic hardship experience life expectancy that is 16 years lower than those living in better economic conditions.

The Cicero neighborhood Network’s bold goal is to help 10,000 Cicero children successfully meet developmental and academic benchmarks by 2027.

1 IN 4

CHICAGOANS ARE OBESE

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Amy came from a loving home with both parents and two siblings. She never witnessed any violence growing up and, for the most part, she had a normal childhood. She was smart and excelled in school and after college she went on to develop a successful career.

Although Amy seemed to have everything going for her, she was also facing some demons of her own, including depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder. For the most part, she was able to live a normal life with the proper medication and regular sessions with her therapist. However, as with anyone, there were some low points in her life and they made her particularly vulnerable.

During one of Amy’s low points, she met a man named Alex who made her feel good again. Alex was charming and successful. Soon after meeting, they decided to move from Florida to Chicago. It wasn’t until Amy was settled into her new life in Chicago that things started to change. Alex became controlling and wouldn’t allow Amy to work, isolating her so she had no one to turn to. This spiraled into severe emotional and verbal abuse that ultimately made Amy lose all sense of who she was.

After five and a half years of abuse, Amy managed to find the courage to leave. She arrived at the Crisis Center for South Suburbia severely depressed, unable to interact with others and suffering from panic attacks. She was quickly assigned a case worker and signed up for counseling services to help her heal from her abuse.

Today, Amy is living independently in a Crisis Center transitional housing program. She was able to find a doctor and get back on her medication and continues to meet weekly with the shelter’s clinical counselors to address the trauma she endured. She has also obtained employment, begun saving money and has obtained a vehicle. However, Amy’s greatest accomplishment is by far the healing and inner-strength she developed with the support of the Crisis Center for South Suburbia.

United Way of Metro Chicago partners with best-in-class agencies and empowers them to work together—improving household outcomes and helping neighborhoods thrive.
Making a commitment to improving your finances or establishing a career takes perseverance and determination. It’s not a quick fix, nor is it easy without the support of others. On New Year’s Eve, 2016, Dwayne made a resolution to do both.

Raised in the Jane Addams projects, Dwayne was surrounded by temptation. Despite being a mechanic by age 16, he ended up in the wrong crowd. After serving time for a felony conviction, he couldn’t find employment. The felony label was more powerful than his years as a mechanic. After being unemployed for seven years, relying on side jobs for income just wasn’t enough for this father of eight. In 2015, Dwayne declared bankruptcy. It was a pivotal moment that inspired him to make a change for his family.

As part of his New Year’s resolution, Dwayne visited the North Lawndale Employment Network (NLEN), a United Way of Metro Chicago partner agency. First, he completed the U-Turn Permitted program, which provided job readiness training, including lessons on how to approach his felony conviction with employers. Two weeks after his graduation, Dwayne’s coach referred him to a transitional job. While working, he completed Moving Forward, NLEN’s Diesel Mechanic Training Program, concurrently with NLEN’s Bridge Literacy program. As he neared the end of his transitional job, he was hired as a Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) Apprentice through the CTA’s Second Chance program.

Recently, Dwayne accepted a promotion at the CTA to become a rail car repair man. He’s now a part of the union and sees a path to management in the future. Dwayne credits his family and the teachers at NLEN for supporting him on his journey. Despite graduating, he still sees NLEN as a refuge and frequently meets with his financial coach, uses the computer lab and keeps up with his teachers. Eventually, he hopes to own his own home, and his financial coach has helped him raise his credit score over 200 points to put him on track to do so. But for now, Dwayne looks forward to the stability of his new job.

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“I wanted something for the long-haul. I wanted a career, not just a job…. I set out to change in a year and it happened in three months. I’m just thankful that someone is seeing it and taking notice.”

—DWAYNE, NLEN GRADUATE

**United Way For Stablity**

133,680 HOUSEHOLDS IMPROVED THEIR ECONOMIC STABILITY WITH HELP FROM UNITED WAY OF METRO CHICAGO’S COMMUNITY PARTNERS

24% OF CHICAGO HOUSEHOLDS HAVE $0 NET WORTH

30%+ OF BLACK FAMILIES LIVE BELOW THE POVERTY LINE COMPARED TO AROUND 25% OF LATINO FAMILIES AND LESS THAN 10% OF WHITE FAMILIES

3 IN 10 HOUSEHOLDS ARE "UNBANKED" (DON’T HAVE A BANK ACCOUNT)

2 IN 10 HOUSEHOLDS ARE "UNDERBANKED" (USING ALTERNATIVE FINANCIAL SERVICES TO SUPPLEMENT BANK ACCOUNTS)

20%+ LOW-INCOME FAMILIES/INDIVIDUALS ARE UNAWARE THAT THEY QUALIFY FOR THE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (EITC)

30,333 CHICAGO METRO AREA RESIDENTS PROVIDED WITH VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA) FROM UNITED WAY PARTNER AGENCIES

**Chicago’s Struggling Neighborhoods Lag More in Economic Opportunity Than Closest Peers in Other Metro Areas**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chicago’s Struggling Neighborhoods</th>
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Economic Opportunity (% of labor force unemployed)

**Economic Opportunity**

CHICAGO’S STRUGGLING NEIGHBORHOODS LAG MORE IN ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY THAN CLOSEST PEERS IN OTHER METRO AREAS

CHICAGO CITYWIDE

LA AND NYC CITYWIDE

LA AND NYC STRUGGLING NEIGHBORHOODS


Chicagoland Area Planning Commission (CAPC) data

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Jeffery came to After-School All-Stars a timid young man who had experienced a lot throughout his short life. At 12 years old, he had already lost close friends and family to the violence that plagues his neighborhood of Englewood. As a toddler, his older brother was taken by the Department of Child and Family Services, which resulted in his grandmother adopting Jeffery to protect him from the same fate. As a rising 7th grade student at Dewey School of Excellence, his grandmother recognized that this energetic pre-teen boy needed additional support that she couldn’t provide alone.

Jeffery’s grandmother enrolled him in After-School All-Stars, a partner agency of United Way of Metro Chicago. He quickly joined four initiatives—We Are Ready, Sports as a Hook, Life Service Action and Career Exploration Opportunities. Together, these programs provided Jeffery with the skills for success in high school and beyond, exposure to the arts and technology, and the chance to explore new hobbies like cooking. But, more than that, the lessons learned at After-School All-Stars helped Jeffery find his voice.

Jeffery quickly matured from the shy boy into a confident leader. Through the programs at After-School All-Stars, he discovered a passion for graphic design and hopes to attend the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Jeffery was even nominated to sit on the After-School All-Stars national Youth Advisory Board and got to spend a week in Washington D.C. learning how to leverage his leadership skills to create change in the Englewood community.

United Way of Metro Chicago partners with best-in-class agencies and empowers them to work together—improving household outcomes and helping neighborhoods thrive.
Educated children and youth are the future. By helping youth build a strong educational foundation and empowering parents to support their learning and development, we can ensure that kids have the skills to be successful in school and in life.

Here at ASAS Chicago we are so proud to see Jeffery taking initiative to lead and make changes in his community. We look forward to all he is going to accomplish within After-School All-Stars, his community, and beyond.

—AFTER-SCHOOL ALL-STARS CHICAGO
In 2013, United Way of Metro Chicago was searching for a structured way to partner with Chicago region leaders to galvanize area residents to create long-term change in their neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Network Initiative was formed as a region-wide strategic plan to address local community challenges by driving focused collaboration. The coalitions consist of community stakeholders—residents, schools, nonprofits, government officials, churches, hospitals and businesses—to identify challenges that the collective group will work toward solving. This model of collaboration allows United Way to coordinate and fund more than specific programs, in order to create integrated programs that support families, build sustainable systems that allow communities to go beyond individual outcomes and focus on large population groups.

This type of community development work is complex and requires organizing the community in new ways. Beyond providing sustained funding, United Way is on the ground with these coalitions helping them create shared planning and measurement platforms, building their capacities and providing leadership development.

Today, all of the Neighborhood Networks are aligned around a shared vision and measurement system and have annual operating plans. Some neighborhoods have already connected stakeholders and built systems that allow them to scale their efforts to drive population change.

10 NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS AND THEIR BOLD GOALS

**Little Village**
Increase the percentage of healthy weight children from 51% to 60% by 2020

**Evanston**
Increase overall kindergarten readiness from 54% to 85% by 2025 while significantly increasing parity for African American and Latino children

**Auburn Gresham**
80% of 3rd grade students read at or above grade level by 2027

**Austin**
Ensure 3,900 children have access to quality early learning programs by 2025; Lift 2,775 families with young children out of poverty by 2025

**Cicero**
By 2027, 11,000 Cicero children will successfully meet developmental and academic benchmarks

**Brighton Park**
Increase high school graduation rate from 78% to 90% at Kelly High School

**Blue Island/Robbins**
Reduce food insecurity for 15% of families served by the Blue Island/Robbins Neighborhood Network by 2027

**South Chicago**
Reduce trauma-related crimes involving youth by 5% by 2027

**West Chicago**
By 2025, 90% of K-8 students will meet projected improvements in reading and math and the obesity rate among youth will decrease by 6%

**Bronzeville**
Connect 5,000 greater Bronzeville residents ages 16–55 with household sustaining jobs by 2027

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THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

From the statistics alone it is easy to imagine a community struggling with gangs, violence and low academic achievement. But that is the Cicero of old. Today, Cicero is a vibrant and safe community. Teens freely stroll into the community center to play basketball, no metal detectors to walk through and no armed security—just kids having fun. The local high school, J. Sterling Morton High School, is the only school in Cook County that has a full service health clinic that provides immunizations, exams and private mental health services. The parents have been organized into parent patrols and parent mentors, with more than 200 parents volunteering their time each week to support the teachers in the classroom and to make sure that children get to and from school safely.

Cicero is one of United Way’s 10 Neighborhood Networks. The Cicero collaborative coordinates youth, health and educational institutions with law enforcement and residents to build a safer and healthier neighborhood. Approximately one-third of Cicero’s population is youth and 10,000 of them have been identified as being at risk for not meeting academic and developmental milestones. The Cicero Neighborhood Network has made improving these outcomes their bold goal, working to make sure that at-risk children and youth are on track by 2027.

United Way, as the backbone organization, has been instrumental in facilitating this network of nearly 50 organizations. United Way provides technical assistance in coordinating, training, capacity building and long term funding, which has facilitated the progress that Cicero has made to increase educational and health outcomes and decrease crime. In fact, recent crime statistics make Cicero one of the safest cities with more than 50,000 residents in the State. Whether you talk to a school principal, a police officer or a social worker they will all say the same thing, “Community collaboration works!”

CICERO, ILLINOIS

The population is 84,000 people.
The average household income is $41,000.
12% of the community is unemployed.
Only 7% of the residents hold a college degree or higher.
85% are Latino.
1 in 5 residents lives in poverty.

UNITED WAY FIGHTS FOR THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

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“Reach for Peace” mural in Pilsen, in an alley off 18th Street, photo courtesy of Brian Kay

As the largest private funder of social services in the region, United Way fights for the health, education, financial stability and safety of every person in every Chicago region neighborhood.

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