

2020



Our Impact Today & Beyond

United Way of the Battle Creek
and Kalamazoo Region

changethestory.org





Transforming our community is like a journey to the moon:

The goal is clear and bright, but getting there is a complex and ever-changing task.

When we began our journey toward 10- and 15-year goals in Education, Income/Financial Stability, Health, and Basic Needs, we knew we'd learn and adapt along the way. Our past impact reports, like this one, prove it. Racial and economic disparities, unique community dynamics, childhood trauma, rising living costs—these and many other factors influence our headway. Some give us the chance to accelerate our pace; others require course corrections both large and small.

Our progress and learnings have helped us better understand those factors and where we can deliver the greatest impact. People who fall below the ALICE threshold—financially struggling individuals and families—are hard-hit, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (learn more about our COVID-19 response on Pages 16–17). As our work evolves, we're focusing even more on ALICE and the most vulnerable families in our region.

That work depends on partners like you. People who share their time and treasure. People who care that every person has the tools and opportunity to build a better life.

As you read this report and learn about our path forward, we hope you're excited! And we hope you'll join us on this epic journey.

Chris Sargent
President & CEO, United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region

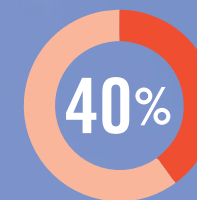
James L. Liggins, Jr.
2020 Board Chair, United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region

The data in this report were aggregated from program reports under strategic grants to Education, Income/Financial Stability, and Health programs, and Basic Needs grants. The data reflect the results of services provided during the grant year June 2018–June 2019.

MEET ALICE

Asset Limited • Income Constrained • Employed

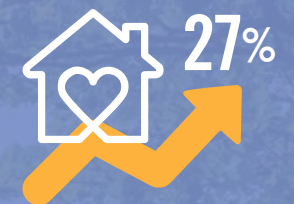
Working households that generate enough income to avoid poverty but not enough to make ends meet.



64,000 households in our region — that's **40%** — can't afford basic household necessities.



This is the full-time hourly income needed by a family of 4 (2 adults, 1 preschooler, 1 infant) to achieve a stability budget. **61%** of Michigan jobs pay less than \$20 an hour.

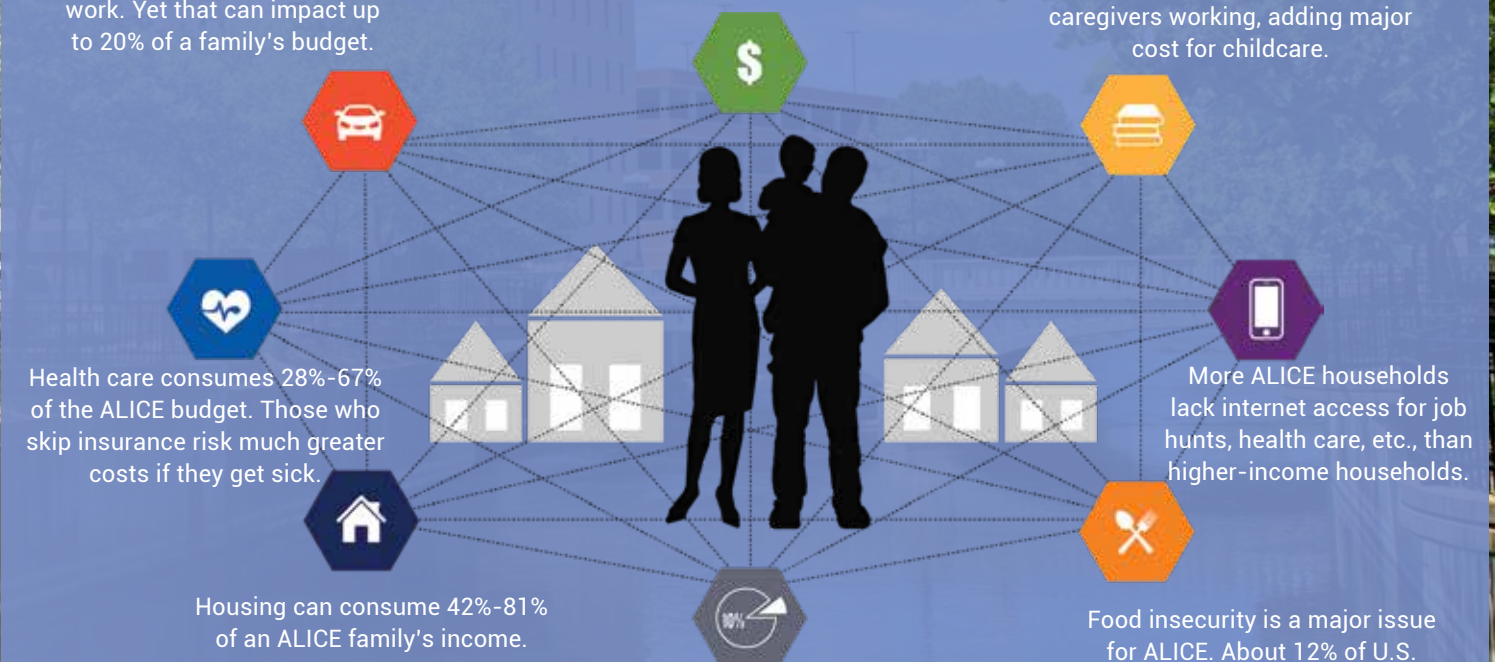


The basic cost of household necessities increased **27%** between 2010 and 2017.

ALICE depends on reliable transportation to get to work. Yet that can impact up to 20% of a family's budget.

Nationwide, the lowest-income taxpayers pay state and local tax rates that are over 50% higher than the top 1% of households.

More than 65% of all children under age 6 have all available caregivers working, adding major cost for childcare.



ALICE households are forced to make difficult choices with limited income, often foregoing health care, medicines, food, rent, etc.

PARTNERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT

2019 BY THE NUMBERS

3
regional
engagement
events



CAREER.LIFE.EXPO.

Career Life Expo

29

community resource agencies

73

employers

364

jobseekers



United Against Hunger

100,000

meals distributed to
local food pantries

219

volunteers

2

hours



Live United Tour

19,514

community kits, diapers and
books collected or assembled

252

volunteers



4 events

193 attendees

\$13,880

raised for local nonprofits



8 Impact Bus Tours

81 passengers



50

events

21,101

community supply kits
assembled by volunteers



308

Corporate partners



41 Inspiring STAR
(Sharing Time and Resources)
Award nominees



3,807
total volunteers



WHO WE SERVE



EDUCATION



Learning Resilience

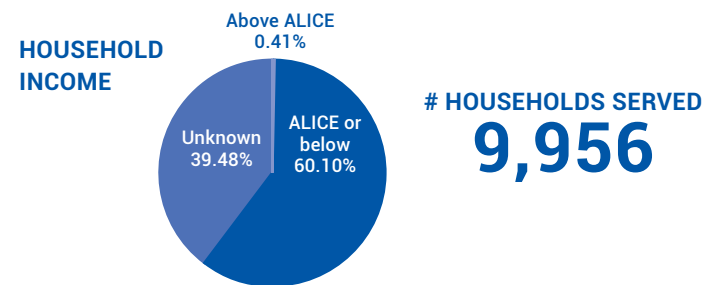
The United Way supported CLIMB (Concrete Lessons in Mindful Behavior), a partnership with Starr Global Learning Network, helping hundreds of

Battle Creek Public Schools students address trauma, build resilience, and get on track toward graduation.

"I was lucky enough to stand alongside students who were willing to begin the process of facing their adverse experiences head-on and do the work necessary to become the best versions of themselves." — Erica Giron, BCPS Student Services Coordinator

RACE	% Served
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.45%
Asian	3.87%
Black or African American	35.52%
Multiple Races	12.54%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.19%
Other	1.59%
Unknown	2.68%
White	43.17%

COUNTY OF RESIDENCE	% Served
Calhoun County	41.69%
Homeless	0.04%
Kalamazoo County	50.64%
Unknown	7.62%



HEALTH



Saving Big for Better Health

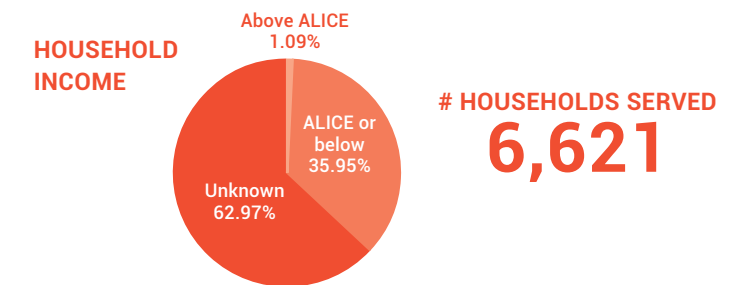
Keeping families healthy is expensive. No one should have to choose between filling their prescription or fixing their car, or paying the rent.

United Way's partnership with FamilyWize, which offers an accessible prescription savings card, saved families in our region nearly \$258,000 on the cost of medicines. Since 2007, the savings exceed \$1.8 million.

"People with low income often have to choose between medicine and food. No one should ever have to make that choice." — Irene Muthui, UW Community Impact

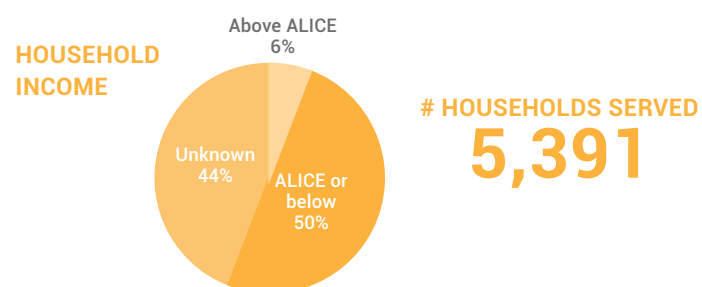
RACE	% Served
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.51%
Asian	2.87%
Black or African American	23.37%
Multiple Races	3.52%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.09%
Other	1.21%
Unknown	33.65%
White	34.78%

COUNTY OF RESIDENCE	% Served
Calhoun County	40.13%
Homeless	0.24%
Kalamazoo County	55.20%
Unknown	4.43%



RACE	% Served
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2%
Asian	3%
Black or African American	34%
Multiple Races	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%
Other	4%
Unknown	22%
White	33%

COUNTY OF RESIDENCE	% Served
Calhoun County	46%
Homeless	2%
Kalamazoo County	52%
Unknown	0%



INCOME/FINANCIAL STABILITY



Building a Better Life

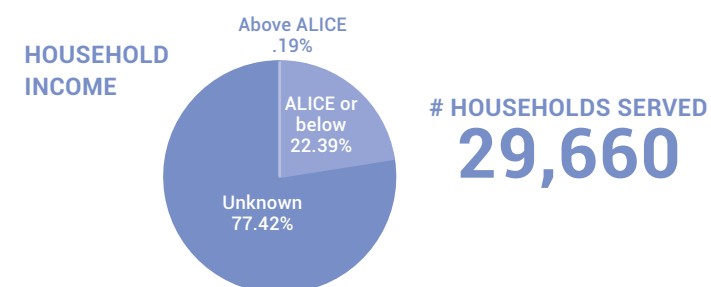
United Way partnerships and programs through Housing Resources Inc. and Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan helped Jakaria avoid

eviction while she struggled to balance parenthood, school and work. This included enrollment in the Family Stability for Educational Success program, funded by the Siemer Institute for Family Stability and United Way BCKR to enhance family success, stabilize a housing or income crisis, connect families to community resources, and drive financial stability and school support. Now she has a full-time job in health care and can provide for her family.

"With the right help, in 90 days I did a complete turnaround." — Jakaria, Kalamazoo

RACE	% Served
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.59%
Asian	0.74%
Black or African American	40.00%
Multiple Races	4.73%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.08%
Other	1.26%
Unknown	8.35%
White	44.24%

COUNTY OF RESIDENCE	% Served
Calhoun County	52.70%
Homeless	11.42%
Kalamazoo County	34.91%
Unknown	0.96%



BASIC NEEDS



Feeding Hungry Families

More than 300 volunteers, including 200 Kellogg employees, assembled 100,000 meals in two hours to feed hungry families at

UWBCKR's third annual United Against Hunger event in Battle Creek. An estimated 1 in 7 households do not know where their next meal is coming from.

"United Way invests more than \$1.2 million in food distribution and removing barriers to food access." — Laurel Clark, UW Community Impact

OUR 5-YEAR JOURNEY

EDUCATION



GOAL: Improve the regional graduation rate to 83% by 2030 and reduce racial and economic disparities in graduation rates.

PROGRESS:	OVERALL	BY RACE	
2014 Kalamazoo County Battle Creek	78.5% 77.5%	58% Black 71% Black	83% White 80% White
2019 Kalamazoo County Battle Creek	86% 79%	67% Black 72% Black	85% White 89% White

LATEST HIGHLIGHTS

OF 415 STUDENTS SERVED,
259 IMPROVED ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.
 53% WERE BLACK STUDENTS.

OF 1,075 STUDENTS SERVED,
585

ACHIEVED THE GOAL OF READING PROFICIENTLY AT THE END OF 3RD GRADE AS MEASURED BY A STATE STANDARDIZED TEST.

13.5% WERE BLACK STUDENTS, AND 67.3% WERE WHITE STUDENTS.

OF 2,161 STUDENTS SERVED,
1,565

SHOWED INCREASED ABILITY TO REGULATE AND COMMUNICATE EMOTIONS EFFECTIVELY.
 43.2% WERE BLACK STUDENTS.

The data reflect the results of services provided during the grant year June 2018–June 2019.

INCOME/FINANCIAL STABILITY



GOAL: Transition 8,500 households to economic stability by 2025.

PROGRESS:	POVERTY	ALICE	BY RACE
2014 Kalamazoo County Calhoun County	17% 17%	24% 29%	64% — Black household median income compared to White median income
2019 Kalamazoo County Calhoun County	12% 19%	26% 26%	63% — Black households in Michigan falling beneath the ALICE threshold

LATEST HIGHLIGHTS

84%
 OF ALICE HOUSEHOLDS WHO RECEIVED WORKFORCE SUPPORTS SUCCESSFULLY INCREASED THEIR WAGES;
 41% OF THOSE WERE BLACK.

355
 HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVED EVICTION DIVERSION SERVICES.

59%
 OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ATTAINED CREDENTIALS WERE ABLE TO ATTAIN OR ADVANCE EMPLOYMENT;
 88% OF THOSE WERE BLACK.



HEALTH



GOAL: Improve infant mortality rates (IMR) in families of color and low-income families to 6.0 (per 1,000 live births) by 2025.

PROGRESS:	BLACK IMR	WHITE IMR	LIVE BIRTHS
2014 Kalamazoo County Battle Creek	15.5 12.1	3.9 8.1	3,955
2019 Kalamazoo County Battle Creek	12.8 10.2	4.7 8.6	3,782

LATEST HIGHLIGHTS

6,621
 PREGNANT WOMEN AND NEW MOTHERS WERE SERVED.

330
 FAMILIES RECEIVED INTENSIVE HOME VISITATION SERVICES.

82% OF BLACK MOTHERS GAVE BIRTH TO AN INFANT OF HEALTHY WEIGHT.



BASIC NEEDS

Demand for basic needs is one way to gauge how the community is making progress in other impact areas. These changes go beyond numbers. For example, transportation assistance has shifted to more bus tokens rather than gas vouchers because fewer households can afford their own vehicle. And while the number of people seeking shelter has fallen dramatically, the length of stay is rising because of lack of affordable housing. These examples underscore the chronic, systemic challenges many people face in our region.

EXAMPLES:	2016-17	2018-19
Transportation assistance:	9,933 people served	8,991 people served
Meals served:	703,449	664,745
Utility assistance:	2,439 households	3,035 households
Overnight shelter:	13,825 people	1,088 people

Where We're HEADED

United Way's strategic impact has evolved to a tighter focus on financial stability and racial disparities. We believe improving the situation for ALICE and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) will accelerate our region's progress on long-term goals in Education, Financial Stability, Health, and Basic Needs.

Investing in programs that center on specific needs among ALICE and BIPOC neighborhoods and households.

Creating innovative approaches and partnerships that address financial instability and racial disparities, such as small business loans/grants.

Realigning organizational tools, technology, staff capacity, and processes to connect better with partners, donors, grantmakers, influencers, and the region at large.

Engaging policymakers, key stakeholders, volunteers and others through advocacy, issue education, volunteerism

Expanding our leadership role in key initiatives – Catalyzing Community Giving (BIPOC philanthropy), Continuum of Care (homelessness), Disaster Relief (basic needs in crisis).

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

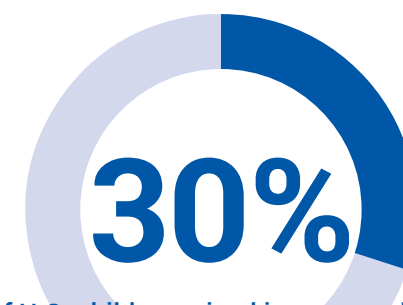
Underlying every social need in our community are two common themes: **financial instability** among working families (that is, households below the ALICE threshold), and **racial inequities** that keep people of color from sharing in the American dream. Since our shift to long-term impact goals in 2015, these influencers consistently affect our work.

EDUCATION

Early grade reading achievement: As recently as this past year, more than half of students have achieved reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade. However, there remains a wide gap when comparing racial demographic data in both state standardized tests and evidence-based assessment.

Social-emotional wellbeing: Early childhood supports and a focus on early grade reading have reached more students, leading to better achievement scores especially among Black students. Even so, racial disparities and financial hardship still have a large negative influence.

(sources: ChildFund International, <https://www.childfund.org/Content/NewsDetail/2147489206/>; Children's Defense Fund, <https://www.childrensdefense.org/policy/resources/soac-2020-child-poverty/>)



of U.S. children raised in poverty don't complete high school, making them 7 times more likely to be persistently poor.

30.1% of Black children, 29.1% of Indigenous children, and 23.7% of Hispanic children live in poverty, compared to 8.9% of white children in the U.S.

INCOME/FINANCIAL STABILITY

Race and ALICE: Four in 10 Michigan households struggle to make ends meet. Far more non-white households overall are ALICE; for example, 63% of Black households fall below the ALICE threshold compared to 36% of white households. For BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities, racial disparities—including systems built upon inequities—are major barriers to financial stability.

(sources: Michigan ALICE Report, <https://bit.ly/2FGmSD7>;



of households in the Battle Creek/Kalamazoo region live below the ALICE threshold.

During 2010-2017, Michigan ALICE households grew 43% among Asian families, 28% among Hispanic families and 8% among Black families, compared to 3% among white families.



HEALTH

Infant mortality: The factors driving high infant mortality are systemic—inequitable policies, cost of care, and social determinants such as racial discrimination, education, employment, environment, housing and food security. They are also historical; the legacy of slavery, from social systems to generational trauma, continues to impact the health of Black Americans.

Health care quality, access and coordination: The coronavirus pandemic revealed unequal care and access due to racial and economic bias. Because the clinical setting drives 20% of health outcomes, these inequities must be addressed. Likewise, coordinating home visits, hospital care and key health care services can dramatically improve outcomes for both mother and child.

(sources: Michigan League for Public Policy, <https://mlpp.org/thriving-babies-start-with-strong-moms-right-start-2020/>; Michigan Department of Community Health, <http://www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/osr/InDxMain/Infsummit.asp>)

Infant and maternal mortality rates are **3-4x**

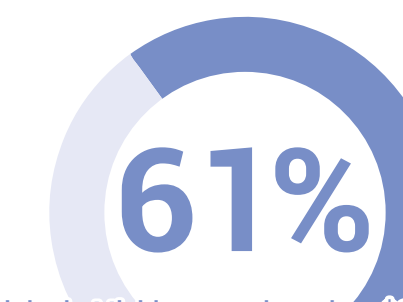
higher for non-white families in the U.S., regardless of economic status. This hasn't changed in more than six decades.

Infant mortality among mothers in Michigan with high school or less education is 2-3 times higher than mothers with post-secondary education. Education level correlates with financial stability.

BASIC NEEDS

Vulnerable to crisis: Times of crisis quickly overwhelm those who are disproportionately impacted by inequitable systems, or do not have a support system or assets to draw on. We've seen this throughout the pandemic and the 2018 Kalamazoo flood. In just four months, the Disaster Relief Fund provided \$1.7 million for food, shelter, childcare and other basic needs due to COVID-19. Many ALICE households, including families of color, are vulnerable to the immediate and long-term economic effects of a crisis.

(sources: Food Access in Michigan, <https://www.faimproject.org/research/hunger>; Michigan's Campaign To End Homelessness, <https://bit.ly/3j3a5t4>; UWBCR Disaster Relief Fund dashboard, <https://changethehistory.org/disaster-relief>)



of jobs in Michigan pay less than \$20 an hour. This is one of several state characteristics that contribute to food insecurity, which affects 1.5 million Michiganders.

BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) comprise 55% of homeless individuals in Michigan. African-Americans make up 13% of Michigan residents but account for 52% of the homeless.

OUR EQUITY JOURNEY

Over the past five years, United Way BCKR has been growing its efforts to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). We firmly believe that these principles are critical to our impact work and to our regional community. Thus we've committed to accelerating this evolution.

In a recent case study, United Way Worldwide highlighted our organization as a model for other United Ways to embrace racial equity. From our partnership with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to drive philanthropy in communities of color (Catalyzing Community Giving) to Kalamazoo Micro-Enterprise Grants to stimulate BIPOC- and women-owned businesses hit by COVID-19, we are striving to walk the talk.

We also recognize we have more work to do. A recent audit of our EDI efforts by Cross Movement Social Justice Consulting and an Equity Culture Survey and trainings by The Truth & Titus Collective are helping define our path forward.

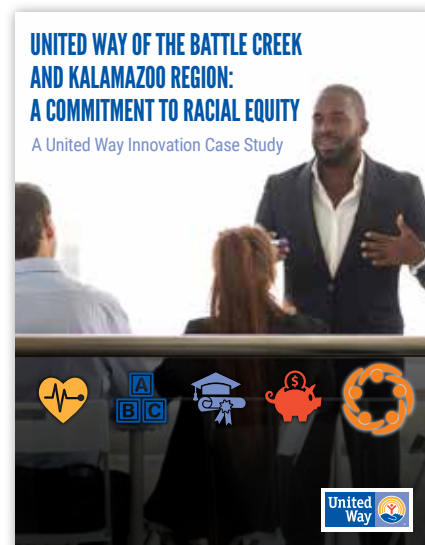
AMONG OUR STRENGTHS:

- Clear awareness and practice of the value of equity, diversity and inclusion via our external impact, including culturally responsive grantmaking that is explicit about race, racism and race equity.
- Growth in implementing EDI best practices across our internal systems.
- Engagement in community-driven initiatives that promote racial justice and equity.
- Partnerships and collaborations, data analysis, and commitment to applying a racial equity lens to every aspect of our work.

WHERE WE HAVE ROOM TO GROW

- Building a more racially diverse board and staff.
- Strengthening organizational policies and practices to be more inclusive.
- Improving equitable grantmaking.
- Engaging communities of color more effectively.

Our leadership, staff and volunteers have committed significant resources to fully becoming an anti-racist organization, and we will continue on this path.



The image above shows our first post-merger external statement committing ourselves to equity, diversity and inclusion in everything we do.



Our comprehensive Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Audit Case Study.

TESTIMONIALS

Take a look at United Way BCKR through the eyes of our community



Recipient

"I have so much more freedom and liberty now that I can ride the bus, I would say that it was the most important thing I could have done in my life. It opened up new possibilities that I couldn't have considered even a year ago."

Jesse — Worked with a Disability Network Southwest Michigan Independent Living Specialist to navigate the bus system in Battle Creek.

Nonprofit Partner

"United Way values collaboration, relationships and community at its core. Their staff work with you to identify the needs your programs may have and offers support well past funding dollars. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic United Way listened to what our first-hand experience was working with clients that had been impacted. When you become a United Way partner agency it is more than just financial support; you gain access to a vast network of resources and relationships."

Jacob Beach — Program Director, Housing Resources Inc.



Small Business Owner

"I applied to numerous grants to no avail. Being a solo private practice owner, it felt as if 'the little guys' were being overlooked. I am so happy that United Way of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region saw my business as one they were willing to support."

Ciji C. Gamble, M.A., LPC, NCC Maternal Counseling Services, PLLC — recipient of a Kalamazoo Micro-Enterprise Grant.

Donor

"Our long standing support of the United Way is founded in their widespread connections to the greater community. They work both to assess and understand the complex needs of the community, along with leveraging multiple area resources toward addressing those needs and building a stronger region. We also value their ability to collaborate and respond quickly to address overwhelming needs during times of significant crisis, such as COVID-19."

Si and Shirley Johnson — long time United Way supporters



COVID-19 RESPONSE

United Way is committed to investing in critical basic needs services. This includes raising and deploying funds effectively during times of community crisis. When Gov. Gretchen Whitmer declared a State of Emergency in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, United Way mobilized quickly to connect partners throughout Battle Creek and Kalamazoo, raise critical funds, get a pulse on community need, and get money on the ground as quickly as possible. What emerged was three distinct bodies of work:

DISASTER RELIEF FUND

The Disaster Relief Fund, in place since 2016 for response to community crisis, was activated on March 13, 2020, for COVID-19 relief. Individual donors, foundations, community organizations and corporate partners quickly stepped up, allowing United Way to raise and deploy more than \$1.725 million to more than 50 different agencies in Battle Creek and Kalamazoo during the initial response phase that ran through July 2020. These partners in turn worked to meet local families' greatest needs, such as food, housing, childcare, and financial assistance.

KALAMAZOO SMALL BUSINESS LOAN FUND

United Way BCKR and the City of Kalamazoo, with \$2 million in funds from the Foundation for Excellence, partnered to launch the Small Business Loan Fund, aimed at supporting businesses and their employees through the downturn. More than 70 businesses in Kalamazoo accepted a low-interest loan from the fund.

KALAMAZOO MICRO-ENTERPRISE GRANTS

KMEG was a \$500,000 grant program designed to bring relief to Kalamazoo's smallest businesses, with priority consideration given to those owned by Black, Indigenous, and all People of Color. Secondary priority was given to Shared Prosperity neighborhoods – Eastside, North and Edison. The program, which awarded \$5,000 grants to 100 business owners, was a partnership between the City of Kalamazoo and United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region with support from the Consumers Energy Foundation and the city's Foundation For Excellence.

*Does not include additional 29 agencies funded in grantmaking partnership with Kalamazoo Community Foundation using Community Urgent Relief Fund dollars



Dollars raised and deployed for Disaster Relief.



Local agencies funded for relief work*



Small businesses approved for loan or grant dollars



Dollars raised for investments in small business loans and grants

SUMMER MEALS



"It's been amazing," said Jill Hinde, CEO of the Battle Creek Family YMCA. "To me, the silver lining of these past four months is being able to help so many people. They're just grateful. Helping others is what's sustaining us right now. It's been a challenging time for everyone. But it's been humbling and gratifying to see the community come together to help others. We're really grateful for the support."

At the Battle Creek Family YMCA, staff and volunteers distributed 100 hot meals twice weekly during the summer months to local children and their families, in partnership with United Way BCKR and with funding support from Kellogg Company and its charitable funds.

SMALL BUSINESS LOANS



"My most pressing concerns were the well-being of my employees and whether or not I could continue to pay them with our doors closed for more than a few weeks and figure out how I could position my business to survive during this time," Kristi Tyler said. "The loan allows me to maintain and pay my staff while continuing to pay overhead costs. Thanks to the generosity of our community, Tulips was provided a safety net during these unprecedented and uncertain times."

Kristi Tyler, owner of Tulips Little Pop Up Shop, said the loan she received from the KSBLF was a vital help for her business and her employees.

KALAMAZOO MICRO-ENTERPRISE GRANTS



"This is absolutely amazing news!" Rebecca Macleery said after learning her business, Loose Parts Studio, received a \$5,000 grant. "This grant provides critical funding to get back on track to opening so that my dream can be realized and so the community has a space in which people can create, exchange ideas, take refuge and inspire one another," Macleery said.

Loose Parts Studio is an emerging creative space hosting a retail shop specializing in high-quality salvaged and "found" items intended for creative reuse, along with a community art studio and a garden cafe. Macleery was wrapping up renovations and was poised to open when COVID-19 hit.



Daarina Perry, owner of Reen's Bling n Things, said the KMEG grant she received will be put to vital use. "With this \$5,000, I'll be able to cover rent, utilities, buy more inventory, get a personal website for my inventory on hand, and better marketing," Perry said.

Founded in 2018, the business sells nickel- and lead-free affordable jewelry and accessories.

United Way is uniquely positioned to assess and address the needs of a community in crisis – and beyond. We were built for this. And we need YOU now more than ever.

United, we will recover. United, we will rise.

JOIN US.

YOU CAN #CHANGESTHESTORY

Volunteer your time. Make a financial gift. Become a corporate partner.

Learn more about our impact. **We need you!**

Visit our website: changethestory.org

Or email us: getinvolved@uwbckr.org



**United Way of the
Battle Creek and
Kalamazoo Region**

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