



Community Investments Overview

About United Way of South Hampton Roads

For more than 95 years, United Way of South Hampton Roads (United Way) has served our local community. As the needs of individuals and families in our community grow more complex, we are adapting our model to better serve them. More than a “funds raiser,” we are bringing together people and resources to solve problems too big for any of us to solve alone. Through the help of generous volunteers, donors and community partners, we are changing the odds for children, veterans, and families across Hampton Roads.

Population Focus

We focus on partnering with vulnerable populations in the South Hampton Roads communities of Chesapeake, Isle of Wight, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach. This includes those below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) as well as those struggling to make ends meet, who we call ALICE®.

ALICE® is an acronym coined by a collaborating group of United Ways that stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. The ALICE population represents a growing number of households in our community who work hard and earn more than the official Federal Poverty Level, but less than the basic cost of living. Previously known as the working poor, ALICE makes too much to qualify for most government assistance yet struggles to afford life’s essentials. Typically, ALICE is one life changing event away from falling into poverty.

The future success of our community is directly tied to the economic stability and wellbeing of ALICE households. When ALICE suffers and is forced to make difficult choices, we are all impacted – ALICE is your child’s favorite preschool teacher, the home health aide who cares for your niece with disabilities, your elderly neighbor living on a limited fixed income, or the administrative assistants in your office. See [United Way Alice Virginia](#) and Appendix A for the ALICE One-Sheet.

City/County	Total Number of Households	% Households below FPL	% ALICE Households	Total % ALICE and below FPL
Virginia Beach	168,061	7%	31%	38%
Norfolk	87,910	17%	42%	59%
Chesapeake	83,364	7%	37%	44%
Portsmouth	36,615	15%	39%	54%
Suffolk	33,377	10%	32%	42%
Isle of Wight	13,902	10%	31%	41%
South Hampton Roads	423,229	10%	35%	45%

The United Way ALICE Project (2018): <https://www.unitedwayalice.org/virginia>

Community Vision for Change

We envision a community where all individuals and families thrive and reach their full potential. To fully realize this vision, we must support those living in or on the verge of poverty or crisis with navigating a path to self-sufficiency. Factors that prevent children and families from experiencing safe, stable, and successful lives are complex and must be addressed holistically.

Today's complexity can be partially attributed to the fact that the world around us is changing drastically and the field of human services is not isolated from these changes. Consider, for instance, that technological innovations and globalization impact employment opportunities and create fluidity in the types of jobs and skills required. Changes like these have serious implications for how we deliver services. In this case, rather than helping people get things such as a specific job or training, our field should be building individuals' capacity to set and achieve goals themselves so that they are adept at navigating work and life as circumstances in their lives and the world around them continue to change.

Ultimately, it is our responsibility to discover ways to design and re-design our programs, organizations, and systems so that they are best equipped to confront complexity while treating people with dignity and maximizing impact. Much of this discovery lies in our commitment to keeping up with emerging research. As we learn new knowledge, we embrace a growth mindset that challenges us to continuously assess our work and ask, "what can we do better?"

Brain science offers one illustration of how emerging research can inform practice.¹ We now know that persistent experiences of poverty, trauma, and oppression cause high levels of chronic stress, which subsequently lead to predictable changes in thinking and behavior. This is because brain development and executive functioning skills are weakened, making it difficult to analyze problems, plan, maintain self-control, and exercise good judgment. When executive functioning skills are compromised, children have trouble learning and adults struggle to manage everyday life. The good news is that executive functioning skills can be developed and strengthened across all stages of life, and improvements can then amplify positive results that people achieve in their lives as well as facilitate independence. Just as our knowledge about the impact of poverty and trauma on the human brain has evolved, so too must the ways we invest in and engage with people on their journeys to self-sufficiency.

Transforming our collective work involves a willingness to critique ourselves and adopt evidence-based practices and values into our programs, organizations, and systems. Below, we share a few design principles and practices as examples of what we value in our community vision for change.²

¹ Using Brain Science to Design New Pathways out of Poverty, Elisabeth Babcock

<http://s3.amazonaws.com/empath-website/pdf/Research-UsingBrainScienceDesignPathwaysPoverty-0114.pdf>

² Using Brain Science to Transform Human Services and Increase Personal Mobility from Poverty, Elisabeth Babcock

[http://s3.amazonaws.com/empath-website/pdf/using_brain_science_to_transform_human_services_and_increase_personal_mobility_from_poverty_\(3\).pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/empath-website/pdf/using_brain_science_to_transform_human_services_and_increase_personal_mobility_from_poverty_(3).pdf)

- *Individualization:* There is no one-size-fits-all approach programming. Flexible services and individualized goals empower children and adults to attain success in their personal journey.
- *Collaboration:* The challenges people face cut across all of the Bridge pillars (see Appendix B and Our Tools section below). To achieve lasting change, we must break down the silos so that services go beyond singular programs. When we make space for collaborative inquiry, we cross-pollinate ideas that lead to creative problem solving and innovation.
- *Coaching:* In contrast to case management, coaching intentionally partners with the participant to build skills necessary for significant, sustained behavior change. The coaching approach is typically scaffolded, meaning mentors guide participants more intensively at first and gradually step away to facilitate independence. In turn, coaching techniques and the use of scaffolding strengthen participants' executive functioning skills. This approach emphasizes long-term, multi-faceted, and individualized goals for life improvement rather than attainment of pre-determined program goals.
- *Environmental design:* Environmental cues influence human behavior and thought process. By incorporating brain science into the processes and physical environments of our programs and organizations, we can reduce stress and support improved functioning. Examples include natural lighting, managing noise levels, and eliminating barriers to accessing programs.
- *High expectations:*³ Success is deeply tied to the beliefs and expectations that direct service providers and practitioners have about their participants. The ability to create and maintain high expectations is no easy feat given the broader societal context that perpetuates stereotypes and public narratives that degrade people who face the most challenges. Use of strength-based practices in programs and adopting counter narratives within organizations illustrate examples of ways to promote a growth mindset.
- *Training:* Strategies that build the professional skills of staff facilitates the adoption of best practice on the front lines. Examples include trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and cognitive behavioral therapy.

Through United Way's investments and the engagement embedded within, we aim to partner with organizations that are ready to join us in embracing transformational change across our collective work.

³ Harnessing the Power of High Expectations: Using Brain Science to Coach for Breakthrough Outcomes, Elisabeth Babcock [http://s3.amazonaws.com/empath-website/pdf/Final - Harnessing the Power of High Expectations - EMPath_Babcock.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/empath-website/pdf/Final_-_Harnessing_the_Power_of_High_Expectations_-_EMPath_Babcock.pdf)

Our Tools

This kind of cutting-edge, big-picture work requires a network of partners and a set of tools to help us deliver results effectively and efficiently. While not an exhaustive list, the following tools help us maximize use of data, collaboration, and best practice to transform how we approach our collective work. Moreover, we believe our work is bolstered when these tools are used in conjunction with each other.

- Mobility Mentoring[®] is a model developed by Economic Mobility Pathways (EMPath) that we adopted in 2016. We believe that the methods, principles, and research of Mobility Mentoring can be applied at varying degrees in diverse settings across health and human services.

Among its many tools and resources is the Bridge to Self-Sufficiency (Bridge), which is both an assessment tool and a framework. The Bridge illustrates the core areas (horizontal axis) in which participants set goals and chart their path to self-sufficiency and supports them with making decisions in context. The upward journey (vertical axis) from crisis to stability to thriving helps people consider their future. Taken together, the Bridge helps participants navigate and plan in the areas they need to focus on to achieve upward economic mobility. It also demonstrates that there is no quick journey from poverty to economic independence, and that services must be coordinated, comprehensive, and have a long-term orientation. See Appendix B for a copy of the Bridge.

The model also includes an intergenerational approach and accompanying tools, such as a separate Child Bridge. For a more complete description of the Mobility Mentoring model, please visit [EMPath's website](#).

- GHRconnects, the Community Indicators Dashboard, tracks meaningful, accurate and standardized data over time. It gives a clear picture of how our region is performing in a variety of critical areas and drives data-driven decisions to help us turn the curve and improve quality of life. GHRconnects also documents and promotes best practices and serves as a space for community collaboratives to communicate the impact of their work.
- Unite Us is a collaborative software that allows us to seamlessly connect people with the services they need in real time. It shifts our work from fragmented services to coordinated care networks. In Unite Us, partners account for their results over time as they help clients like ALICE[®] access the services that are right for them. Our system dramatically increases efficiencies, enables visibility into every client's total journey, and meets the highest standards of security, such as full and verified HIPPA, FERPA, SOC2 compliance. It also helps us achieve the Mobility Mentoring principles of collaboration and individualization. See Appendix C.

- Results-Based Accountability (RBA) is an approach that encompasses population and performance accountability. RBA provides a simple, structured approach for measuring performance of programs and services. RBA has three types of performance measures: how much did you do?, how well did you do it?, and is anyone better off? Measures that indicate whether anyone is better off are most important and meaningful yet are hardest to control.

About Our Investments

As we respond to cultural shifts in the workplace and community, we seek to strengthen and reimagine our work through a variety of existing and emerging strategies. Beginning in 2019, our grant opportunities will be offered primarily through Request for Proposals (RFPs) released throughout the year to enable flexibility and responsiveness while promoting greater structure and cohesiveness. Across these opportunities, we aim to invest in direct services (including both essential services and program investments) and systems change because we believe this two-pronged approach is crucial to tackling our community's most complex challenges.

Organizations are encouraged to apply for any and all opportunities that suit their programming and strategic objectives. A Community Investments Overview Chart is available at the end of this document and in Appendix D.

Agency Certification

Certification is a one-year classification – and not a grant funding opportunity – that United Way of South Hampton Roads offers to local nonprofits that have a direct, substantial presence in UWSHR's service area. Certification demonstrates to the public that an agency has met a robust set of standards covering three core areas: financial health, governance, and performance accountability. All certified agencies have access to the full list of benefits that certification offers. When an agency is approved for certification, this status is active from July 1st through June 30th of the respective year. Please review the *Agency Manual* for full details, which is available on the [Agency Resources webpage](#).

Essential Services and Program Investments

These two types of investments represent the longest-running grant funding opportunities at United Way. In 2019, RFPs will be released in three investment areas: Early Childhood Success, Youth Success, and Thriving Families.

Essential Services offer assistance to individuals and families in immediate crisis or on the verge of crisis. The results achieved through essential services resolve threats to stability for individuals and families and relate to Maslow's (1943) basic hierarchy of needs (physiological and safety levels). Essential Services often become entry points into programs that utilize a longer-term approach to self-sufficiency.

Services that qualify as Essential Services are generally defined by:

- short-term, one-time, or limited engagements with people accessing assistance, such as emergency food, rental, or utility assistance to ensure people eat and remain safely housed.

OR

- longer-term supports that assist those whose conditions are not expected to change, such as prepared meals delivered to homebound older adults.

Program Investments are generally defined by more extensive engagement with program participants. Examples include youth development and out-of-school time programs, programs that achieve permanent housing, and other types of programming that produce measurable results among participants. Sometimes a program may begin as an essential service, yet when longer-term engagement occurs, the program extends into a program investment.

Initiative Investments & Special Projects

Our two current initiatives – Mission United and United for Children – are long-term, multi-sector efforts that focus on specific populations and address entrenched problems by establishing a common agenda and aligning resources and strategy.

Mission United is the first ever coordinated network of community resources and services in Hampton Roads providing relief and support to veterans, active duty military members, and their families. Utilizing Unite Us technology, we seamlessly connect military-connected individuals and families to services such as affordable housing, job training, and health care. The Hampton Roads region boasts one of the largest military-connected populations in the nation – over 400,000 veterans, active duty members, and their families.

United for Children exists to give every child in South Hampton Roads the support needed to achieve their dreams. Our United for Children work began in 2012 in the St. Paul's area of Norfolk, a neighborhood with endemic generational poverty and concentrated public housing where more than 50% of residents are children. Through cross-sector partnerships with nonprofits, faith-based partners, city governments, school districts, and community stakeholders, we have built promising solutions by carrying the voice of our community on the issues that matter most for children. In addition to this important place-based work, we continue to expand the scope of United for Children by embracing new investment strategies while maintaining our commitment to three core values: truth, trust, and no turf.

Leveraging the strategic focus of our initiatives, the United Way will continue investing in several special projects, such as:

- Oral health in partnership with the Hampton Roads Community Foundation, including direct service grants and supporting the Virginia Oral Health Coalition with convening regional stakeholders.

- A two-year LENA Start pilot in partnership with the City of Virginia Beach’s Grow Smart Committee and participating community partners that brings together technology, brain science, and family engagement to promote early language development in young children.
- Aspire, a three-year Mobility Mentoring-informed pilot funded by Women United.

As needs emerge within United Way’s initiatives and the broader community, additional RFPs may be released in 2019 to support investments in newly identified area(s) and/or opportunities.

Community Accelerator Fund

This newly established fund offers small grants and has two primary purposes:

1. To build the capacity of community collaboratives or coalitions with established systems-change goals; and/or
2. To make funds accessible for emergent, unanticipated projects or opportunities that promise creative, cutting edge solutions for our community.

Once the Community Accelerator Fund RFP is released, inquiries will be accepted on a rolling basis until funds are expended.

Overview of Community Investments

Investment Area & Key Elements	Early Childhood Success RFP	Youth Success RFP	Thriving Families RFP	Community Accelerator Fund RFP	Initiative Investments & Special Projects RFPs
Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality, accessible early childhood development 2. Parental engagement and learning 3. Developmental screenings (ASQ) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality, accessible out-of-school time programming 2. Promotion of social-emotional learning 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Longer-term supports that assist those whose conditions are not expected to change 2. Short-term emergency assistance for life’s essentials 3. Upward movement in at least one pillar on the Bridge 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capacity building for collaboratives and coalitions 2. New creative or cutting-edge ideas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Targeted projects or programs that support United for Children and Mission United 2. Targeted efforts that address other emergent community needs
Eligibility	Certified agencies only (except strategy 3)	Certified agencies only	Certified agencies only	Open	Open (eligibility details in RFPs)
Application Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eligibility quiz 2. Application 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Eligibility quiz 2. Application 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eligibility quiz 2. Application 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Letter of interest 2. Application (by invitation only) 	Varies by opportunity – Multiple RFPs, TBA with releases
Grant Amounts (Per Year)	Suggested minimum: \$10,000	Suggested minimum: \$10,000	Suggested minimum: \$10,000	Suggested range: \$5,000-\$25,000	
Length of Grant Term	1 year with opportunity to extend	1 year with opportunity to extend	1 year with opportunity to extend	1 year with opportunity to extend	
Date Application Opens	January 7, 2019	January 14, 2019	January 28, 2019	March 2019	
Submission Deadline	February 22, 2019	March 1, 2019	March 22, 2019	Rolling	
Date Grant Starts	July 1, 2019	July 1, 2019	July 1, 2019	1 year from approval date* *Earliest start date: July 1, 2019	