

United Way of West Central Mississippi Community Agenda: Strengthening Families

United Way of West Central Mississippi believes that strong families are the foundation of a thriving community. When families have access to quality education, stable employment, supportive services, and safe neighborhoods, everyone benefits. This Community Agenda outlines our strategic focus for driving meaningful change in our region. It reflects our commitment to addressing the root causes of family instability and lifting up the voices of those we serve. By investing in financial stability, lifelong literacy, youth opportunity, and community resiliency, we aim to create a collaborative and inclusive framework that empowers all families—regardless of background or circumstance—to succeed and thrive. Our work is grounded in a long-term mindset, focused on sustainable progress and generational impact.

Focus Area: Financial Stability

Goal:

Increase household financial security and reduce barriers to economic mobility.

Objectives:

- Expand access to job training and workforce development programs that lead to livable wages.
- Support free tax preparation and financial coaching services.
- Partner with local employers to promote savings, benefits utilization, and career pathways.
- Reduce barriers that impact workforce participation.

Key Indicators:

- % of households earning a living wage
- Use of VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) services
- # of individuals completing job training/certification programs

Focus Area: Lifelong Literacy

Goal:

Ensure individuals of all ages have access to the tools and support needed to develop strong literacy skills.

Objectives:

- Promote early childhood literacy through access to books, reading programs, and caregiver support.
- Support literacy programs for K–12 students at risk of falling behind.
- Expand adult education and digital literacy initiatives.
- Build partnerships with schools and libraries to create a culture of reading.

Key Indicators:

- Kindergarten readiness scores
- Third grade reading proficiency
- Adult literacy and GED completion rates

Focus Area: Youth Opportunity

Goal:

Empower young people to succeed in school, work, and life.

Objectives:

- Increase access to mentoring, afterschool, and summer enrichment programs.
- Strengthen pathways from high school to post-secondary education and careers.
- Support programs focused on social-emotional learning and leadership development.
- Foster youth voice in program design and community change efforts.

Key Indicators:

- High school graduation and post-secondary enrollment rates
- Youth employment and internship opportunities
- Youth engagement in leadership activities

Focus Area: Community Resiliency

Goal:

Build stronger, more connected communities equipped to withstand and recover from adversity.

Objectives:

- Improve coordination and capacity of local nonprofits and service providers.
- Promote volunteerism and civic engagement.
- Address trauma, mental health, and disaster readiness through targeted partnerships.
- Enhance the information and referral system (211) to improve access to essential services and real-time crisis support.

Key Indicators:

- Volunteer engagement levels
- Nonprofit capacity and collaboration measures
- Community health and safety indicators

Our Commitment

United Way of West Central Mississippi will lead, convene, and invest in initiatives that advance these priorities. By working together with our partners—nonprofits, schools, businesses, faith communities, and residents—we can create a region where every family has the opportunity to thrive.

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