Impact Guidance Letter: Community Stability and Advocacy

**Objective**: Increase the number of individuals and families accessing family stability supports including health, basic needs and advocacy.

- Sub-Objective 1: Family Stability
- Sub-Objective 2: Advocacy

**2030 target**: End intergenerational poverty by improving the coordination and impact of systems and policies that support United Way’s three community-level targets:

- # of children reading on grade level at end of third grade
- # of opportunity youth connected to school and/or work
- # of individuals and families at 200% of the federal poverty level

**Counties served**: Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia

**Results-based accountability “story behind the curve” (background)**: Families living in poverty often face or have faced significant trauma, like abuse, neglect, or losing a family member to violence, drugs, or incarceration. On a daily basis, they struggle with access to basic needs. These challenges often make individuals susceptible to jobs that do not pay a family-sustaining wage and they may lack the resources or supports for their children to be successful in school. This creates a cycle of poverty that affects families for generations.

We know poor health (e.g., chronic health conditions, hospital readmissions, delayed or no preventive medical care, and high emergency room utilization rates) correlates with obstacles in overcoming intergenerational poverty. We also know from our experience and from our 2-1-1 users that individuals and families who are vulnerable have multiple needs, many of which are the most basic (i.e., food, rent or mortgage, utility assistance, and trauma). Meeting basic needs is the foundation of family stability and the lack thereof severely impacts the chances for children, youth, and families to move forward on a continuum out of poverty.
We also know through our work that federal, state, and local policies can create barriers for individuals and families to accessing quality education, health, and living conditions. This ultimately impedes their journey to stability. Therefore, United Way’s public policy and advocacy efforts are keys to ending intergenerational poverty. We rely on partners with strong community and advocacy experience and relationships to help us deliver on this work toward strong communities across our footprint.

**United Way’s work to date:** United Way is seen as a leader and convener in the health and human services space, supporting the most vulnerable individuals and families. United Way has traditionally supported individual basic needs agencies in the areas of food, shelter, and personal safety. Given growing demand and limited resources, United Way will focus on providing a central point of information and referral access, building increased system coordination and access, and supporting providers with broad geographic reach to turn the curves and targets identified.

We know from our 2-1-1 resource navigators that individuals call about a particular need, but they or someone in their household often have several needs or complicating factors. United Way is committed to providing individuals and families with a central access point through 2-1-1 (call, online, text, or chat) to find the information and referrals they need in challenging times. Additionally, through this objective, we are committed to building a system that responds holistically to individual and family needs by integrating health and basic needs services with providers in areas of focus. Agencies need to support the individuals and families they serve with all possible resources to help them be successful. For more information on United Way’s 2-1-1 work, visit [https://www.unitedforimpact.org/our-work-to-date/](https://www.unitedforimpact.org/our-work-to-date/)

We have succeeded in supporting the expansion of access to quality pre-K, advocating for legislation to support a statewide 2-1-1 system, and making the federal Earned Income Tax Assistance program permanent. For more information on United Way’s advocacy and policy work, visit [http://www.unitedforimpact.org/get-involved/advocate](http://www.unitedforimpact.org/get-involved/advocate)

**What works to turn the curve:** We know that people often face challenges in navigating the social service sector, which is complex and difficult to maneuver. Individual needs go beyond the resources of one agency; thus, more resource sharing and collaboration is necessary to respond holistically to individuals and families. Meeting these challenges requires efficient collaboration and our goal is to
work with providers to address these systemic issues. We must come together to create a plan to better serve those who seek assistance. In addition, we know that without policy changes, the systems that support our communities will continue to be fractured and under-resourced.

**Required program components (sub-objective 1)**

1. Comprehensive reach in at least one of these areas: benefits access; rent, mortgage, and utility assistance; and healthy food access
2. Service provider in at least two of the eight UWGPNJ counties that span Pennsylvania and New Jersey

**Preferred program components (sub-objective 1)**

1. Service provider in more than three of the eight UWGPNJ counties that span Pennsylvania and New Jersey
2. Currently delivering trauma informed services
3. Partners with 2-1-1 (NJ and/or PA) to maintain a current list of programs and services and promote 2-1-1 as a resource for individuals and families served, volunteers, donors, and staff
4. History of volunteer management
5. History of advocacy
6. Two-generation approach: considering dependents and their caregivers in approach to service delivery
7. Serve meaningful numbers of individuals and/or families living at or below 200% of the federal poverty level and/or communities/neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty (eligible zip codes detailed in the objective applications).

**Required program components (sub-objective 2)**

1. Actively supports policy work in all Pennsylvania or New Jersey counties in UWGPNJ's footprint
2. Demonstrates ability to improve systems, policy, and practice at a regional or statewide level linked to the results outlined in the strategy guidance letters
3. Partners with 2-1-1 (NJ and/or PA) to maintain a current list of programs and services and promote 2-1-1 as a resource for individuals and families served, volunteers, donors, and staff.

4. Decision-making structure supports and manages advocacy work and a clearly defined agenda is in place to guide advocacy activities.

5. Makes advocacy a strategic priority and demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that capacity and resources for this work are available.

6. Identifies, builds, and maintains working relationships with appropriate legislators and their staff who make or influence policy decisions related to advocacy objectives and/or appropriate contacts in public agencies that support implementation of policies and programs related to advocacy objectives outlined in the strategy guidance letters.

**Agency performance measures**

**How much? (sub-objective 1)**

- # of unduplicated individuals that received emergency food
- # of unduplicated individuals screened for the full complement of benefits
- # of unduplicated individuals who applied for emergency rent, mortgage or utility assistance

**How much? (sub-objective 2)**

- # of unduplicated individuals that attended meetings/convenings
- # of legislators engaged through meetings
- # of new community members educated and engaged about advocacy issue(s)
- # of new organizations engaged in advocacy issue(s)

**How well? (sub-objective 1)**

- # of pounds of food distributed
- # of unduplicated individuals enrolled in at least one public benefit
- # of unduplicated individuals who received emergency rent, mortgage or utility assistance
How well? (sub-objective 2)

- # of meetings/convenings held
- # of legislative meetings held
- # of issue briefs and/or reports produced

Is anyone better off? (sub-objectives 1 and 2)

- To be determined in partnership with newly funded community partners

In partnership with others, United Way seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Move the nonprofit sector toward implementing trauma-informed practices.
2. Create a shared vision for the region to have a more integrated and comprehensive approach to individuals’ and families’ basic needs; intersect this work with our other core strategies toward ending intergenerational poverty as a means to further support service provision in our region.
3. Expand utilization of 2-1-1 and ensure that it is a robust access point of information and referral for our region.
4. Develop a community safety network of providers who are accurately represented in the 2-1-1 database and use the system as a source of referral.
5. Increase capacity of nonprofits by matching volunteers with opportunities.
6. Create systemic changes through coordinated advocacy efforts.
7. Move the nonprofit sector toward service delivery in a two-generation approach.
8. Implement an effective and systematic communications platform for United Way and partners to inform and advance our advocacy positions and messaging.