

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 2 P.M. ON OCT. 18, 2018**

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**GREATER TWIN CITIES UNITED WAY ANNOUNCES NEW APPROACH TO COMMUNITY BUILDING**  
*New Strategy Will Disrupt the Extent Income, Race or Place Impacts One's Ability to Thrive*

**MINNEAPOLIS (OCTOBER 18, 2018)** — As part of its long-range plan and transformation, [Greater Twin Cities United Way](#) (GTCUW) today announced its new approach to community building, anchored in a long-term commitment to equity with a focus on filling the biggest gaps in opportunity across the Twin Cities region. The approach is based on a vision where all can thrive, regardless of income, race or place, with the goals of increasing educational success; household stability; and employment and economic opportunity.

United Way developed the new strategy based on feedback from more than 100 listening sessions with nonprofit partners, donors and independent subject matter experts, as well as 103 years of experience strengthening the community. The feedback indicated the most persistent challenges in the Twin Cities region including: employment and income gaps; education disparities; lack of supportive and affordable housing; racial disparities; and untreated mental illness – all of which are addressed in the new approach.

Additionally, data gathered from United Way's 2-1-1 resource hotline over the past two years indicated that basic needs – most prominently housing challenges – are the most common reason people reach out for help.

**Inequities in Minnesota and in the Twin Cities Region**

Youth facing persistent poverty are 13 percent less likely to graduate from high school; 29 percent less likely to enroll in (and 43 percent less likely to complete) post-secondary education; and 36 percent less likely to retain consistent employment.\* While Minnesota has experienced an eight percent reduction in poverty with gains in the Twin Cities, people of color and American Indians experience poverty at four times the rate of white residents in the Twin Cities region.\*\*

“Today, we can reasonably predict a person's life outcomes based on their income, race and/or place of residence,” said Acooa Ellis, SVP of Community Impact, Greater Twin Cities United Way. “Disparities are not inevitable. There are multiple, complex reasons they exist—and, I believe that as a community, we can change the narrative together. Our new approach will disrupt the inequity that manifests in opportunity gaps, often beginning early in childhood and persisting through adulthood.”

**New Community Building Focus Areas, Expected Outcomes and Nonprofit Partnerships**

Overall, the new approach includes continued work in education, food security and workforce readiness; an increased focus on ending homelessness; and less focus on broad health care, independence and legal services. It also reflects deeper collaboration with nonprofit partners, inviting them to develop solutions to critical challenges based on their collective wisdom and expertise.

***With the goal of increasing educational success,*** United Way will support the engagement of parents in the educational success of their early learners, helping children ages 0 to 5 meet critical developmental goals. The new plan also includes support for social and emotional learning for youth grades 6 to 12 through out-of-school-time programs, as well as increasing access to United Way career pathway programs for middle school and high school students.

Expected long-term outcomes of this work include parents and children enter kindergarten ready to learn and thrive, and youth are equipped with the knowledge, skills, mindsets and relationships to choose and direct their own future path and contribute to their communities.

***With the goal of increasing household stability,*** United Way will help people obtain safe, stable and affordable housing with access to healthy and culturally relevant food. Specifically, United Way will work to fill the gap in support for people transitioning from foster care, hospitalization and corrections.

Expected long-term outcomes include the prevention of homelessness where possible and where it is not, homelessness is rare, brief and non-reoccurring. In terms of food security, outcomes include residents in the nine-county region having access to an efficient, high-quality food system.

***With the goal of increasing employment and economic opportunity,*** United Way will focus on skills credentialing for in-demand fields, along with job placement and retention. The organization also will focus on improving financial wellbeing, as financial health is a predictor of financial mobility and stability.

For this focus area, expected outcomes include adults entering the workforce prepared with the skills necessary for employment and increased wealth.

“This new approach enables United Way to fulfill our promise of supporting the community and it honors our donors by effectively maximizing their gifts through investments in prominent areas of need for significant impact,” said Nancy Lindahl, member of the Board of Directors, Greater Twin Cities United Way. “Donors will see their passions reflected in the new strategy.”

United Way will support community building not only through grantmaking, but also through:

- Connecting volunteers with nonprofit needs
- Fostering shared learning and capacity building among nonprofit leaders through convenings and ongoing communication
- Public policy work
- Coalition building
- United Way’s 2-1-1 resource hotline

### **Support for Nonprofits**

Given the new approach, some nonprofits will receive more funding, some less and some may find their work outside of the new focus areas. Currently funded partners that fall outside of the new scope will receive six additional months of transition funding at the current grant level through the end of 2019. They also will be invited to apply for grants in partnership with another nonprofit to leverage complementary skillsets and to continue partnering with United Way

through coalition building; field-building activities; volunteer recruitment and engagement; and continued facilitation of designations.

**Editor's Note:**

*Sources for statistics include:*

- *\*Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System. Minnesota ECLDS, 2018*
- *\*\*Minnesota Compass; MSP Regional Indicators Dashboard, 2018*

**About Greater Twin Cities United Way**

With one in four people living in poverty in the nine-county region, Greater Twin Cities United Way fights to end poverty and support long-term wellbeing by providing access to food, housing, education and the workforce. When we support wellbeing, we ensure everyone can reach their potential and fully contribute to our community. We do this by bringing together the public, private and nonprofit sectors to solve the community's most pressing needs. Through partnerships, public policy work, volunteer programs, our 2-1-1 hotline, grant making and nonprofit leadership support, we take a holistic, long-term approach to help people meet their potential. That's because we know when more of us reach our potential, our whole community benefits. For more information, visit [www.gtcuw.org](http://www.gtcuw.org), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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