

United Way of Henderson County (UWHC) has organized and mobilized community resources to improve the lives of Henderson County residents since 1953. UWHC brings together partners from businesses, education, government, faith-based, and nonprofit organizations to work toward common goals, resulting in a better-quality life for all.

United Way of Henderson County supports everyone in Henderson County. From Etowah to Edneyville, and Mills River to Zirconia, we create relationships and collaborations with nonprofits throughout our County that align with our core impact areas of health, education, financial stability and basic needs.

Throughout our history, UWHC has not only been a funder, but a community leader, convening conversations on key issues and supporting a growing network of essential nonprofits who are working together to support our community. UWHC serves as a critical backbone organization in our local community, and we have a "bird's eye view" of the most pressing concerns in our area and the partners who are collaborating to meet those challenges. We are proud of our partnerships and the collaborations, as well as the many ways that we are able to provide essential resources and volunteer services throughout our community.

United Way of Henderson County (UWHC) is in its tenth year of Henderson County 2025, a ten-year plan to 1) increase kindergarten readiness and support school success for underserved children; 2) improve economic self-sufficiency and increase access to affordable housing; 3) improve physical activity and nutrition among residents, and encourage healthy youth behaviors. The goal is to make steady advances by creating solutions that lead to lasting change.

UWHC's cash investment to assist the community during the 2023-24 fiscal year is over \$1.2 million. It not only includes allocations to 26 local partner agencies, but also direct-pay designations from donors to community agencies, strategic initiatives, volunteer initiatives, United Way community impact work and sponsored programs such as 2-1-1, Women United, Small Business League and Rising Leaders. However, United Way also leverages additional community support in the form of other community assistance and savings (people receiving assistance from the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, prescription savings through Singlecare and the value of volunteer hours in strategic initiatives, etc.) Adding the value of this additional community support puts United Way's total community impact at over \$1.82 million. This means we put over a dollar of impact value back out into the community for every dollar we raise. See details in the paragraphs below.

As mentioned above, UWHC also provided high-impact services and savings to people in Henderson County. Singlecare prescription discount cards helped local residents save a total of \$146,182. NC 2-1-1, United Way's information and referral helpline, was a critically important resource and made 1,121 referrals last year to Henderson County residents, directing them to resources including food, shelter, health care or help paying mortgage, rent or utility bills.

Volunteers are also a tremendous non-cash asset. UWHC had the help of over 1,034 volunteers, providing over 5,677 volunteer hours, valued at over \$180,000 during 2023-24 to help improve the community. UWHC hosted two community-wide volunteer events, Days of Action and Days of Caring. More than 278 community volunteers came together to work on service projects at 22 Henderson County schools as part of Days of Action 2023. Days of Caring 2024 brought more than 265 volunteers out to complete 31 projects at 24 nonprofit agencies, including assisting with the NALC Letter Carriers Food Drive, which collected over 36,000 pounds of food for local food pantries.

Women United (WU), a Leadership Giving Affinity Group, had a busy eighth year. During the 2023-2024 year, there were 83 members. These women continued to support Girls EMpowered (GEM), a weekly afterschool program designed to increase confidence and school success for girls in fifth and eighth grades. GEM began in 2017 at Upward Elementary School and quickly expanded to Hillandale Elementary School and Hendersonville Middle School. United Way of Henderson County and Women United launched an ambitious 3-year expansion and will ultimately serve 12 locations and up to 900 girls by the end of the expansion period. Throughout the 2023-2024 school year and summer break, GEM served 62 girls in 3 elementary schools, 1 middle school, and the Boys & Girls Club of Henderson County. WU members served as guest speakers, volunteers, mentors, and chaperones. The GEM girls received educational presentations from a variety of women professionals, enjoyed women leadership tours^[MK1], and received self-care kits and backpacks filled with school supplies. Women United members also donated \$256 worth of feminine hygiene supplies to Project Dignity, 164 books to children in foster care, and \$12,500-worth of holiday gifts for 50 children in Henderson County. WU members nominated programs that align with WU's focus area of supporting the education and self-sufficiency of women and children in Henderson County. WU members then voted for three \$1,000 mini-grant awardees. The 2024 winners were Smart Start Partnership for Children to help address the childcare crisis in Henderson County; teachers at Fletcher and Glenn Marlow Elementary Schools for the GLOW/Shine! programs that inspired WU's GEM program; and Hope Coalition to support the new Youth Connections Center in Henderson County.

Our strategic direction is guided by our 2023-28 Strategic Plan. The plan focuses on 4 bold goals relating to community impact, resource development, community engagement and education, and organizational capacity, while ensuring that we build capacity and embed equity throughout our organization.

Small businesses play a critical role in maintaining our thriving local economy and are an important part of our work. Our Small Business League is comprised of 14 local small business who give back to their community through United Way and a special League voted initiative each year. In 2023 the League directed this funding to the Safelight's Job Training Program, which supports survivors of interpersonal violence.

UWHC received and used gifts in-kind valued at over \$361,000. This covered donated items, printing, supplies, and various media resources such as newspaper and radio. Additionally, UWHC secured corporate sponsorships totaling \$73,400 which help cover the cost of campaign, events and operational items. This means that more dollars from donors go directly to programs and services to those in need. We not only provided over \$380,000 in grants to local nonprofit agencies, but we also raised an additional \$177,000 in donor designations that passed directly to the recipient agencies chosen by those donors.

United Way works hard to leverage all types of support- financial, in-kind, and volunteer- to ensure that our community receives the maximum benefit. Our core mission support covering our Management and General expenses has a 3-year average of around 10%. When accounting for cash, plus non-cash value of in-kind and volunteer hours, UWHC puts over a dollar of value back into the community for every dollar raised.

Now in its 14th year, the Rising Leaders initiative is a UWHC Program designed to develop the next generation of community leaders and board members for Henderson County non-profit organizations. In 2023-24, twenty-one Rising Leaders completed the program, and many have been recruited to serve on local boards.

Born Learning Trail is an education activity program. It promotes learning in a fun and interactive way while boosting language, reading, problem solving and critical thinking skills. It offers families a place to be active, elevate awareness of early childhood education and be a visible symbol of the community's commitment to young children. UWHC supports two Born Learning Trails, one on the Ochlawaha Greenway, a popular walking and bicycling trail for local families, and our original Born Learning Trail at Mills River Park, which received an update to all learning spaces and new signs, including the addition of Spanish language signs.

UWHC also convenes community conversations on important issues. In 2023-24, we introduced EveryDay Strong, a program that equips caring adults with training and tools to support the mental health and wellness of children aged 8 to 18. Utilizing a train the trainer model, this program is now being used by Big Brothers Big Sisters of WNC as a resource for their Bigs.

United Way also works with partners and area-wide collaborations such as the Nonprofit Forum, Nonprofit CEO Forum, Henderson County Partnership for Health, Emergency Food and Shelter program (EFSP) securing \$40,810 in grants, Henderson County Childcare Crisis Taskforce, Henderson County Committee for Activity and Nutrition, and the Behavioral Health Summit.

These items are an overview of the various outreach and non-tangible items that Henderson County United Way offers to the community in conjunction with, and in addition to funds provided to programs, initiatives and agencies to improve the lives of Henderson County residents.