

**May 10, 2017**

## **Maintaining Stable Housing: United Way of the Midlands-Funded Programs That Address Challenges for Individuals and Families**

Making the house or rent payment involves a sizeable portion of most people's incomes. But imagine how overwhelming it feels for those who pay about a third or more of their income to keep a roof over their heads – right here in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area.

It's a reality for 50,520 local households that pay thirty percent or more of their income for rent. Another 13,415 households are paying 25 to 30 percent of the family income for their housing.<sup>1</sup>

This means a lot less income is available for other basic needs like healthy food, medical care and transportation. And when the monthly income can't support the house or rent payment, the result often is a loss of housing which can mean moving, perhaps more than once. The stress can be hard on children and adults alike.

According to the Corporation for Enterprise Development, 29 percent of Nebraska residents have almost no money in savings to cover emergencies, which is another factor that affects the stability of housing for individuals and families involved. Included in this group are Nebraska residents who live below the official income poverty line of \$23,050 for a family of four, as well as many who would consider themselves middle class.<sup>2</sup>

### **THE IMPACT OF NOT HAVING STABLE HOUSING:**

When kids have to change schools, data shows it negatively impacts their classroom performance. It increases the dropout rate and ultimately causes problems as they become adults, with depression as a key factor. In the Omaha Public Schools, the metro's largest school district, 8,723 students move in a given year.<sup>1</sup>

Adults suffer from the stress of moving constantly as well, with increased rates of chronic and preventable diseases and worsened mental health.<sup>1</sup>

### **HOW UNITED WAY OF THE MIDLANDS ADDRESSES THE CHALLENGES:**

In partnership with thousands of local donors and many strong community partners, United Way of the Midlands is working on solutions for our neighbors' housing stability. During 2017, UWM programs are delivering 15,000 services to local individuals and families – linking them to housing supports and programs that help them stabilize their living situations. Included in the services are:

- Housing transition and reintegration for the homeless
- Repair services for the elderly and disabled
- Tenant services and financial education/stability training
- Outreach and education for those unable to advocate for themselves including the disabled, returning veterans, new immigrants.

By 2025, United Way of the Midlands will deliver more than two million basic needs services to our neighbors who live in poverty – with the goal of helping them achieve financial stability.

<sup>1</sup> *United Way of the Midlands "2025 Goals"*

<sup>2</sup> *Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) January 2013 news release*

**COMMUNITY  
STRONG**  
unitedwaymidlands.org

**United Way  
of the Midlands**



UNITED WAY OF THE MIDLANDS CONTACT:

Kathy O'Hara (kobrehm@uwmidlands.org)  
Office: 402.522.7963 | Mobile: 402.981.7516

**About the United Way of the Midlands**

Thanks to donors, volunteers and community partners, United Way of the Midlands is not only focused on addressing our community's human needs today; it is focused on what can be, and what should be. It is building on today's strong partnerships to create even more comprehensive human service efforts tomorrow, so our community can solve some of the root causes of poverty. United Way is community-based, community-focused. Thanks to those who share their strength, United Way is COMMUNITY STRONG. We invite you to visit [www.UnitedWayMidlands.org](http://www.UnitedWayMidlands.org) for more information.

**This is the fifth in a year-round series of communications to focus on the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area's key challenges and our community's work to address them.**