

For Immediate Release: June 30, 2022

\$32 Million Raised by United Way of the Midlands to Support Those in Need in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metro Community

Thanks to the generosity and caring spirit of the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro, United Way of the Midlands (UWM) is excited to announce it raised **\$32 million** during the fiscal year that ends today, June 30, 2022. This vital funding allows UWM to invest in more than 100 local nonprofit agencies, as well as direct services that address social and economic disparities and meet community members' essential needs.

This year's campaign effort was led by the 2021 campaign chairs, Lance and Julie Fritz, and the team at Union Pacific Railroad. Thanks to their passionate leadership, UWM exceeded its campaign fundraising goal and surpassed Mr. Warren Buffett's Tocqueville Society Membership Challenge – reaching 371 members and increasing his generous match of UWM's campaign. Additional support was provided by city, county, state, federal and private funding, as well as foundation grants.

"The generosity and commitment to giving back shown by our metro-area residents is remarkable," said Lance Fritz, 2021 Campaign Chair and Chairman, President & CEO, Union Pacific. "Their support will play a vital role in helping our community recover from the pandemic and address inflationary pressures. We are truly grateful for the philanthropic spirit of our community."

A catalyst for change for nearly 100 years, UWM has evolved its strategy to both invest in local agencies and provide direct services that were previously unavailable. With many continuing to recover from the pandemic, the demand for services from nonprofit organizations in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro continues to grow – impacted in large part by the highest rate of inflation we've seen in decades. Currently, one in three families is struggling to make ends meet in our community.

As one of the highest-performing United Way organizations in the network, UWM is always diligent in working with donors, thought leaders and valued partners to find the most effective and efficient way to meet our community's needs. For its upcoming investment cycle, UWM will invest more than 93 cents of every donated dollar back into our community to help our neighbors move forward and build a stronger future.

The Investment Breakdown

The full body of UWM's work includes traditional investments through our Community Care Fund and specialized funds, as well as our ever-growing list of direct services. UWM will support and provide more than four million services that will address social and economic disparities in the areas of basic needs, education and financial stability throughout our community. These investments will be made in six program areas through a multi-year funding process.

UWM is investing \$8 million annually from its **Community Care Fund (CCF)** into 140 programs, with an additional \$2 million in donor-directed designations. All of the agencies and programs selected to receive funding are reviewed and vetted by a team of subject matter experts and volunteers who participate on Community Investment Review Teams (CIRT). This diverse and dedicated group of more than 100 individuals use their critical thinking and expertise to make funding recommendations in three primary categories with 15 sub-categories: Basic Needs (physical health, behavioral health, health promotion, family support, food access, shelter, homeless prevention, care coordination); Education (mentoring, attendance/academic support, early learning, out-of-school programs); Financial Stability (education and training, jobs and readiness, financial literacy). Thanks to CIRT's commitment and due diligence, UWM is able to make the best investment decisions for the metro area.

For its first year of the **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Fund**, UWM will be investing \$400,000 in 12 programs that specifically support racial equity, and Black, Indigenous, (and) People of Color (BIPOC) populations based on socioeconomic and health outcomes that are widely disproportional by race. The DEI Fund will advance racial equity by supporting BIPOC-led nonprofits that are empowering BIPOC community members such as low-income, women, refugees and immigrants through the following funding categories: Workforce Development (vocational/skill training, certification, licensure and credential); Entrepreneurship (technical training, loan/access management, business financial literacy); Employment (accessibility, job search, interview, placement and retention); and Financial Empowerment (asset development and financial literacy curriculum).

Through its partnership with the City of Omaha, UWM will administer \$2.5 million annually, for the next two years, in investments from the **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fiscal Recovery Fund** to 33 programs. These programs will specifically focus on basic needs including access to food and shelter, services for persons experiencing homelessness, access to health care, behavioral and mental health services, health promotion and education, financial literacy, and family support.

Funding for community partner, **Combined Health Agencies Drive (CHAD)**, helps health charities conduct innovative research, provides critical client services and offers education and prevention programs to many members of the metro area.

UWM partners with the Omaha World-Herald to administer the **Goodfellows** program that provides help to those in our community who have fallen on hard times – including people between jobs, the elderly, those who have experienced abuse and those facing a personal crisis with nowhere else to turn.

Funding for the **Karnett Trust** is directed to seven local programs and seven agencies that focus on the care, education and training of children up to age 21 with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their caregivers.

Direct Services

UWM's remaining investments support direct service programs which focus on many unseen and unmet needs in the community and surrounding areas. "United Way plays a key role in improving the quality of life for so many in our metro," said Tim Burke, outgoing UWM Board Chair and retired, President and CEO, Omaha Public Power District. "The work United Way leads in direct services is critical. Leveraging their community-wide lens, they have identified services they are uniquely positioned to administer successfully and drive greater impact."

The **211 Contact Center** is a resource that connects people looking for assistance across Nebraska and Southwest Iowa to local health and human services programs that can help. We will end the fiscal year on June 30 with more than 300,000 contacts, and the greatest areas of need being housing and utility assistance, transportation, food and access to equitable health. Additionally, 211 partners in two social determinants of health systems, including collaborations with Children’s Hospital and Medical Center, UNMC Munroe-Meyer Institute, UNL Center for Children Family and the Law, CyncHealth, Unite Us, CHI Health and many others.

JAG Nebraska is committed to providing in-school support for students and helping them develop their skillsets to overcome the many challenges they face. The program sets students up for success in the classroom, workplace and life. Students build relationships with local employers, engage in project-based learning and develop a strong sense of civic and social responsibility. Students graduate with a strong foundation to pursue career opportunities or further their education. JAG Nebraska partners with 12 school districts throughout the state to offer the JAG Advantage at 25 program locations serving over 1,200 students in the ’22-’23 school year.

UWM’s **Housing Stability Program** includes our partnership with the Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (MACCH) to administer the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and distribute rent and utility assistance for individuals adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the program, individuals can apply for past due and/or future rent and utility assistance. As part of its partnership, UWM is responsible for collecting all necessary application information so households can qualify for assistance; entering information into the database; disbursing payments to property owners, property managers and utility companies; and providing direct assistance to applicants and other eligible parties in a timely manner. To date, the program has disbursed more than \$14.3 million in rent/utility assistance to help more than 3,200 individuals.

Through its partnership with Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare, UWM will expand access to **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** training. This will give individuals the tools and resources they need to help someone struggling with mental health challenges, along with helping reduce the stigma of and barriers to seeking help.

With our **volunteerism program**, UWM annually engages more than 6,000 volunteers in various projects to help those in need. Working with our partners, we will create and distribute 5,000 Shine Bright hygiene kits for students in the Omaha and Council Bluffs Public Schools. We’ll also help our partners support nonprofit agencies by creating Good on the Go care kits, along with designing/supporting custom volunteer activities.

The **Court Referral Community Service Program (CRCSP)** refers criminal offenders to agencies for completion of judge-ordered community service hours, verifies they complete the allotted hours and delivers reports to the offenders’ probation officers. The CRCSP assists approximately 300 clients annually – representing more than 2,500 service hours for our community.

And **Raise Me to Read** is part of the Omaha Metro collective impact model to improve school readiness, out-of-school learning, school attendance, grade-level reading and to disrupt generational poverty. As a member of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, a community solutions action plan was completed and continues to guide our work. Raise Me to Read was named a 2022 All-America City Award finalist,

based on our community's work to support affordable housing which, in turn, supports efforts to increase childhood literacy.

United Way of the Midlands is proud to leverage its unique position in the community to serve as a convener, collaborator and information aggregator. To step into these roles, we examine our community's most pressing challenges from a broad lens and work with our trusted allies to bring the business and nonprofit communities together to address them.

"Through the pandemic and with current inflationary pressures, we have continued to see our community's needs evolve and grow," said Shawna Forsberg, UWM President and CEO. "We are grateful for the generosity of so many in our community, and honored to have such an engaged and caring Board of Directors. Thanks to all of their support and belief in what we do, we can strengthen our Circle of Support and continue addressing the needs of the metro area, building a stronger tomorrow for our neighbors and their families."

For a full list of UWM's community investments, please visit www.unitedwaymidlands.org/circle-of-support-investments.

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About United Way of the Midlands

For nearly 100 years, United Way of the Midlands (UWM) has served the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro by bridging the business and not-for-profit sectors to create a Circle of Support that helps our neighbors overcome difficult challenges and start building a better future. UWM's funded programs and direct services address social and economic disparities and meet families' essential needs such as healthy food, safe and stable housing, physical and mental health services, career preparation and job training. For more information visit, www.unitedwaymidlands.org.