UNITED WAY
Northwest Illinois

2024.2025 IMPACT REPORT

We aspire to be the critical link which brings together our diverse communities to build stronger, healthier, and more sustainable communities as cost effectively as possible.

524 W Stephenson St, Freeport IL (815) 232-5184

OUR FOCUS AREAS

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

- Every child has access to a high quality early learning environment
- All families are stable and maintain a nurturing home environment
- All children have access to literacy based programs that have been proven to increase reading skills, which are important to their success in school and work.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- Individuals/families attain a good quality of life, healthy development and healthy behaviors across all stages of life.
- Individuals receive the support necessary to manage disease and live well.

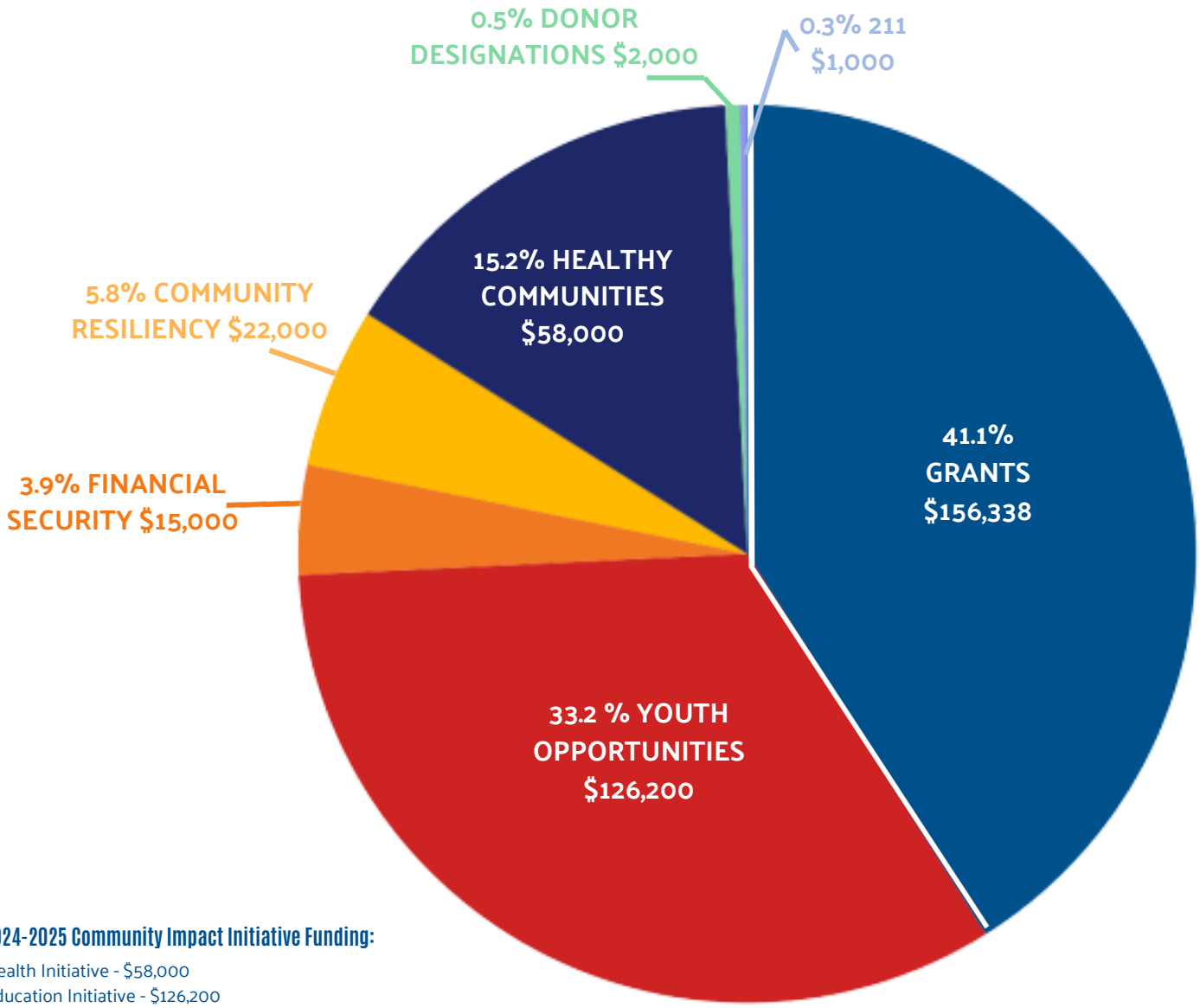
FINANCIAL SECURITY

- Working individuals and families have access to quality training and skill development to increase income and improve financial stability.
- Help students build a future plan by connecting school to real life opportunities that positively impact their academic achievement, classroom engagement, and career and life success.
- Develop a social and financial support network to break the cyclical patterns of poverty and increase financial stability.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

- Increase community safety and stability through **food**, and **housing**

Total investment July 2024-June 2025
$380,538



2024-2025 Community Impact Initiative Funding:

Health Initiative - $58,000
Education Initiative - $126,200
Basic Needs Initiative - $23,000
Financial Security Initiative - $15,000
211 Stephenson, Jo Daviess, Carroll Co. - $1,000

2024.2025 IMPACT AT A GLANCE

41.7%

of all residents in Jo Daviess, Carroll & Stephenson counties were served through United Way programs.

$222,200

in funding for Community Impact Initiatives.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITY

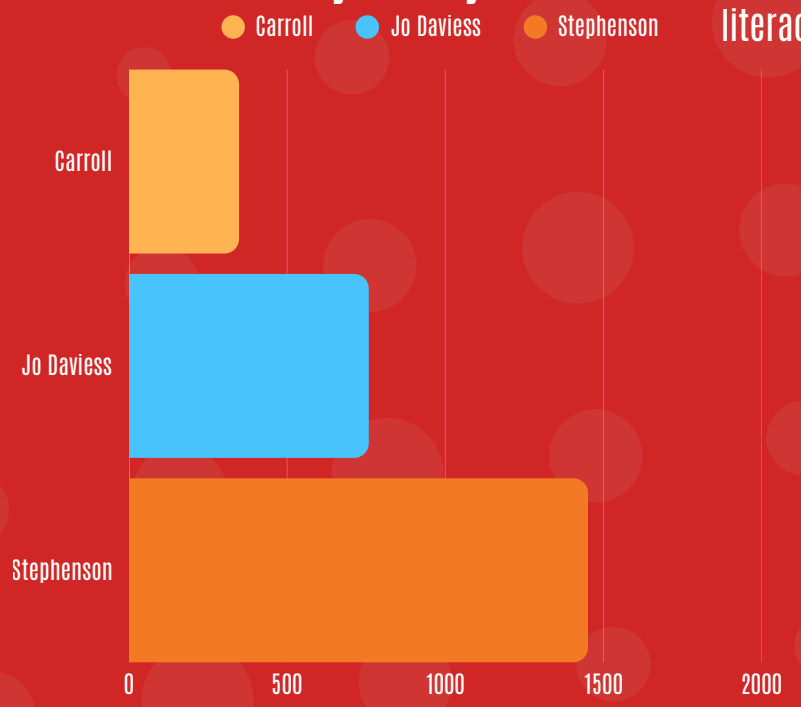
Born learning trail

The initiatives supported by United Way empower young people with early education initiatives, skills, and mentorship to help them succeed in school, work, and life.

United Way's Education Initiative focuses on supportive communities, effective schools, and strong families – strategies and approaches rooted in research.

United Way champions youth mentorship and essential literacy skills by focusing on closing the literacy opportunity gaps through targeted intitatives that provide equitable literacy redources, guidance and education interventions.

Children Served by County:



- United Way prioritizes high-quality out-of-school (OST) programming as a crucial component of our comprehensive approach to preparing every young person for success.
- We collaborate with the Early Childhood Consortium and provide childcare spaces for low-income families.
- By taking a comprehensive approach to enhance early childhood development, we improve childcare center quality and access.
- We support parents, caregivers, and communities to create early learning opportunities for young children.

Learn more about Youth Opportunity

YOUTH OPPORTUNITY

Jo Daviess County	Carroll County	Stephenson County
1,496	574	3,158
DPIL Graduates	DPIL Graduates	DPIL Graduates

"It would be better for my family if both my husband and I worked, and I want to work. But with no child care in our community, I have no choice but to stay home with my preschooler."
-Community Member,
Jo Daviess County from Birth to 5 Illinois

Finding and affording childcare is a critical part of families staying on their feet. United Way funds multiple early childcare programs that assist with childcare allowing parents to work and remain self sufficient.

BY THE NUMBERS

Olivia age 3

261,504
Dolly Parton Imagination Library books sent to kids in Northwest Illinois since 2016

$126,200
Invested into youth opportunity

Dolly Parton Imagination Library

90%	60%	97%
Of families spend more time reading with their child	Of families report increased interest in reading	Say DPIL Boosted Book Variety at Home

FINANCIAL SECURITY

We help individuals and families achieve long-term stability and independence.

Under the Financial Security initiative, the United Way of Northwest Illinois' goal is to increase resiliency in our communities by providing services that equip families and individuals with the tools and resources to stay or become economically independent.

The Teens in Transition and Fast Track programs funded by United Way worked to address the root causes of systemic racial inequality by providing equitable access to critical transition services for youth with disabilities–particularly students of color who are often disproportionately affected by educational and economic disparities. Of the 66 students served through this funding, 42 identified as Black, 23 as White, and 1 as Hispanic.

By delivering these programs directly within schools in Stephenson County, RAMP eliminated common access barriers related to transportation, cost, and awareness barriers that disproportionately impact students of color. The curriculum emphasized not only job readiness and independent living skills but also self-advocacy, education rights, and confidence-building; empowering students to navigate and challenge the systems that have historically limited their opportunities.

Through the RAMP Teens in Transition program:

94%

of students increased their knowledge of independent living options

86%

of students increase their job readiness skills

93%

of students increased motivation for employment

66

High school students with disabilities served through Teens in Transition and Fast Track programs

Learn more about Financial Security

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

We connect people with the resources they need to navigate crisis and build stronger, more resilient communities.

United Way believes every community deserves to thrive. We work with our neighbors to create well-connected, supportive communities that can respond to any challenge. We funded programs with Freeport Area Church Co-op for safe and reliable housing, NICAA/Golden Meals to assist in feeding seniors, and 211 a resource hotline for residents seeking assistance programs.

- Freeport Area Church Co-op kept the Chicago Avenue Mission open 24/7 providing safe shelter which was made possible by United Way
- NICAA Senior Services, Golden Meals, offers home delivered meals to those who are home-bound or otherwise unable to attend congregate meals
- United Way supports 211, a free, 24/7 hotline that connects people to locally available resources.

BY THE NUMBERS

+1,000

Meals provided a day through Golden Meals

UNITED WAY | 211 Get Connected. Get Help.™

Learn more about Community Resiliency

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

We are addressing urgent needs today and advancing for a better tomorrow.

211 in Northwest Illinois :

Jo Daviess County

49 contacts made
75 needs assessed

Top 3 assessed needs:

Housing and shelter 20%

Employment and Income 19%

Food and meals 13%

Stephenson County

309 contacts made
421 needs assessed

Top 3 assessed needs:

Housing and shelter 36%

Utilities assistance 16%

Employment & income assistance 13%

Carroll County

35 contacts made
51 needs assessed

Top 3 assessed needs:

Housing and shelter 22%

Employment and Income 19%

Food and meals 13%

Understanding 211

When in crisis, it is challenging to know where to turn to for help. Sometimes it can be difficult to locate assistance programs or to even know what is available. This is where 211 and United Way step in. 211 ensures all Illinois residents have access to free and confidential recourse assistance services. Residents can contact 211 by call or text. Trained representatives assess needs, refer to local organizations and programs available, and report their findings to better assess needs and recourses in the future.

United Way's Role

Through United Way's experience innovating to meet community needs, forming relationships with local nonprofits, businesses, and community leaders, we're uniquely positioned to bring our community together to understand problems, co-create solutions, and manage accountability for the best results.

UNITED WAY

211

Get Connected. Get Help.™

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Promoting safety, independence, and access to care for all ages.

The Domestic and Sexual Violence Safety Coalition is a network of community partners focused on providing services to those affected or at risk for abuse, violence, neglect, and/or exploitation in our community.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) provides developmental, academic guidance, and mentorship to at-risk & underserved girls in Freeport and surrounding areas that encourage participants to learn to create and maintain healthy relationships with their peers.

The Safety & Access Change Initiative (SACI) partners Voices, Ramp, and Tyler's Justice Center

Safety and Access Change Initiative envisions a community aware of and acknowledging domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual assault where agencies and systems are safe, accessible, inclusive, and collaborative in order to enhance best practices in the provision of services and support for survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors.

The Outcomes:

The Safety and Access Change Initiative increased agency-to-agency communication, cooperation, and familiarity amongst the partner organizations which aided in improving the success of survivor-centered referrals, sharing of resources, and collaboration within the local community.

The SACI initiative is making systemic changes and improving survivor access in Stephenson, Jo Daviess and Carroll Counties.

Learn more about Healthy Communities

Community Snapshots

Girls Who Rock Pearls!

At United Way, we know that building community well-being is a team project. That's why we're constantly working to engage community members and local businesses in volunteerism - mobilizing the caring power of our community to create lasting, generational change.

The Girls Who Rock Pearls at Freeport Middle School is a collaboration between United Way, FSD145 and VOICES.
PEARLS stands for Positive, Empowerment, Awareness, Respect, Leadership, and Success.

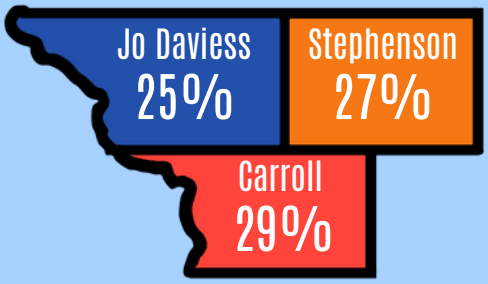
2025 saw another successful Day of Action with over 100 Volunteers and 10 locations.

Celebrity Dinner!

Celebrity Dinner netted over $21,000 thanks to our sponsors and guests.
Proceeds from the Celebrity Dinner help fund the UWNI's Community Impact Initiatives in Stephenson, Jo Daviess, and Carroll counties.

Our A.L.I.C.E., Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed population is growing in our region. A.L.I.C.E. represents households in the U.S. who earn more than the Federal Poverty Level but not enough to be economically secure. A.L.I.C.E is the population that our United Way Initiatives support and your investment provides funding for programs that are crucial to these individuals through our Community Resiliency funding.

% of A.L.I.C.E. households



The United for ALICE reported that as of 2023, 25% of Jo Daviess, 27% of Stephenson, and 29% of Carroll counties met the criteria for being Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE)

Community Snapshots

Born Learning Trail!

The Born Learning trail installed in Shannon is our third and most recent installation. Born learning is an innovative public engagement campaign that helps parents, caregivers, and communities create quality early learning opportunities for young children. Each Born Learning Trail contains 10 interactive signs with activities for adults to engage in with young children to turn an outdoor trip into a fun learning experience.

The Lincoln-Douglas 5K, One-Mile Fun Run, and Kids Races combines a fun, fast, and competitive 5K race with a 1 mile Fun Run and series of Kids Races that ultimately crowns the "Fastest Kid in Town".

Lincoln-Douglas 5K!

Through a Healing Illinois Grant we were able to bring in a consultant to work with community leaders and community members to focus on housing issues and concerns in Freeport.

United Way attended the Resource Fair at Freeport Middle School. This was the second year of the Resource Fair which aims to connect families with local programs for mental health, financial, and early childhood assistance. United Way raffled off two backpacks with books and supplies with 75% of raffle entrees also signing up to be volunteer candidates.

United Way of Northwest Illinois awarded Platinum Transparency by Candid and Four-Star Charity on Charity Navigator.

Platinum Transparency 2025 Candid.

Charity Navigator FOUR-STAR

Celebrating 75 years!

This year, United Way of Northwest Illinois celebrated 75 years of community impact!

Because of volunteers and supporters like you, we've been able to uplift our community for 75 years. Thank you for helping us build a brighter future together.

Scan the QR Code below to view our 75th Anniversary video showcasing how United Way of Northwest Illinois has progressed and developed through the years.

2025 UNITED WAY Northwest Illinois

2004-2024

1972-2004

1970-1972

1952-1970

1950-1952

United Way 75th Anniversary Video

2025/2026 Partner Agencies

Youth Opportunity - $126,200

- Amity
- YMCA
- Boys and Girls Club
- Dolly Parton Imagination Library

Healthy Community - $58,000

- Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois
- VOICES
- RAMP
- Tyler's Justice Center

Community Resiliency - $23,000

- 211
- Golden Meals
- Freeport Area Church Cooperative

Financial Security - $15,000

- RAMP

"Each month, our son gets excited to see his new book in the mail. Each time a new book comes, he eagerly awaits bedtime so we can read as a family. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library has helped to get our son excited about reading and begin a little tradition for us to have a monthly family reading night when a new book comes."

-Anonymous DPIL Parent

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Give

United Way combines your contribution with donations from others and invests in proven programs making a real, measurable impact.

Advocate

United Way brings together partners and passionate individuals to advocate for the people of Northwest Illinois through policy and regulation changes at the state and local levels.

Volunteer

United Way coordinates volunteer activities for Northwest Illinois programs and projects that support community initiatives in our region.

Visit: uwni.org
or call (815) 232-5184 for more information