

EDUCATION

We fund services that support school readiness, literacy, and academic success for children in our community.

EDUCATION INVESTMENT STRATEGY (2025-2027)

United Way funds services that ensure young people have equitable access to gain the knowledge, skills and credentials so they are prepared for the workforce and able to obtain family-sustaining employment. We recognize community investments are crucial from early childhood through transition to young adulthood (age 0-26).

We remove educational barriers for young people and their families by investing in programs that demonstrate the following client age-appropriate outcomes:

- Meet or exceed age-appropriate developmental milestones
- Gain positive parenting/co-parenting skills
- Improve kindergarten readiness
- Increase social connectedness
- Increase prosocial behaviors
- Develop positive values, social competencies, and positive identities
- Improve or maintain academic performance
- Graduate from high school on time, and/or earn HiSET, and/or earn credentials based on client goals
- Gain further education, vocational skills, and/or job readiness skills based on client goals



EDUCATION

AGENCY	PROGRAM NAME AND DESCRIPTION
Big Brothers Big Sisters	Community Based Mentoring Program: pairs youth ages 5 through 18 who are facing adversity with a caring adult mentor and help them achieve educational success, set high aspirations, avoid risky behaviors, and have healthy relationships with peers and adults.
Boys and Girls Club	Great Futures Start Here Program: provides youth K-12th grade a safe, regularly scheduled, nurturing, structured and supervised environment outside of school. Programming is available afterschool, during the summer, select school breaks and teacher workdays throughout the year.
Central Missouri Community Action	BRIDGE Program: supports the social emotional health of the whole family, engages teachers in activities that lead to classroom success, develop relationships between families and their schools, and connect a community of support to both parents and their children. BRIDGE empowers children and families to be self-reliant by fostering social resiliency, supporting academic success, and building social connectedness.
City of Refuge	The City Preschool Program: aims to provide high quality, affordable preschool that prepares children ages 3-5 to be successful in kindergarten. In addition, we will serve the refugee community as a target audience by providing English language peers, thus opening the program to all preschool children. City of Refuge's early childhood education program provides families of 3-5 year old children in Boone County, with and without backgrounds as displaced persons, a safe, welcoming environment for cross-cultural learning and educational preparation as they learn and play together with people who differ from them.
Columbia Housing Authority Low-Income Services (CHALIS)	Moving Ahead Program: helps low-income youth and children succeed in school and live by providing quality trauma-informed out-of-school programming enhanced with supportive services and activities to promote social emotional development of the entire family.
Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture	Farm to School Program: is a nutrition and garden-based program at schools that improves fruit and vegetable consumption leading to better physical and mental health outcomes and academic achievement for children living in the City's three most economically distressed neighborhoods
Community Playground of Columbia	Fun City Youth Academy: improves mental health outcomes and socioemotional resilience, promotes academic achievement and healthy lifestyle choices, and strengthens family units for City of Columbia/Boone County Children.
First Chance for Children (FC4C)	Lend & Learn Libraries Program: supports positive parenting behaviors and child exploration in an educational, safe, and inclusive space, ultimately leading to children's kindergarten readiness.

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AGENCY	PROGRAM NAME AND DESCRIPTION
Grade A Plus, Inc.	Academic Support and Enrichment Program: reduces disparities in school success through out-of-school tutoring, mentoring, academic and cultural enrichment, and life skills development along with supportive engagement of parents.
Harrisburg Early Learning Center	Early Childhood Program: provides safe, healthy, affordable early childhood education to prepare children for kindergarten success.
Jabberwocky Studios	STEAM Program: helps youth develop positive values, social competencies and positive identities; increases social connectedness; and increases participant likelihood of graduating from high school, contributing to increased academic, social, and personal equity.
Jabberwocky Studios	The Art Bus: provides out-of-school arts experiences to children in low-income neighborhoods who would otherwise not have access to the benefits of these experience. We aim to help participants develop positive values, social competencies and positive identities, while supervising them during times that they may be at risk of becoming involved in destructive behaviors.
Kingdom Konnections	The Education Program: empowers parents with skills and resources necessary to support their children's academic success and overall well-being by providing comprehensive educational support and resources. Through enhanced parenting skills and knowledge, the program aims to reduce educational neglect, improve family learning engagement, and promoting positive, healthy development for children at home and at school.
People Embracing Another Choice Equitably (PEACE)	The Mending Fences Program: aims to reduce criminal behavior among high-risk youth by fostering prosocial values, resilience, and social competencies. Through education and guidance, the program aims to help youth develop positive identities and successfully navigate the justice system, supporting P.E.A.C.E.'s mission to transition youth into responsible adulthood.
United Community Builders	UCB Academy Program: provides child development and academic achievement programming for pre-kindergarten to 6th grade students. Our curriculum provides a sequence of learning objectives that prepare each pre-K child for kindergarten readiness, and K-6th grade elementary students with homework assistance, instructional learning in math, reading, and sciences. It is our goal to develop a love of learning in each child and to provide the foundations for their future academic success.

FINANCIAL STABILITY

We fund services that strengthen the financial stability and economic mobility of individuals/households who are financially vulnerable.

FINANCIAL STABILITY INVESTMENT STRATEGY (2026-2028)

Heart of Missouri United Way addresses the community's financial stability needs by investing in programs that remove financial stability barriers for individuals/households by demonstrating the following client outcomes:

- Gain vocational skills
- Improve credit score
- Improve personal finances
- Improve utilization of traditional banking resources
- Increase income and assets
- Maintain or gain housing stability
- Maintain or gain independent living
- Obtain employment
- Obtain job readiness skills
- Retain employment



FINANCIAL STABILITY

AGENCY

PROGRAM NAME AND DESCRIPTION

City of Refuge

Refugee Financial Stability Program: empower resettled refugees in Columbia, Missouri to achieve financial independence by helping them obtain employment, delivering education on household personal finance, providing individualized English language instruction, and assisting them in obtaining legal identification documents. We help them navigate a new life and become productive, successful, contributing members of our community.

Columbia Center
for
Urban Agriculture

Veterans Urban Farm Program: increase employment for Veterans through paid job training and soft-skill development. Increase overall stability for Veterans by connecting them to community resources and providing ongoing support to advocate for their needs. Increase access for Veterans to healthy, fresh fruits and vegetables.

Love Columbia

Extra Mile Program: reduce financial fragility and promote upward economic mobility among low-income individuals in Columbia, Missouri. This goal will be accomplished by providing instruction to increase financial literacy and giving opportunity to practice new financial skills. Participants will be further helped through assistance to access available resources and, if needed, provided no interest loans to eliminate high interest debt.

Love Columbia

Side by Side Program: increase stability and general well-being and reduce isolation and inertia of low-income individuals in Columbia through access to community resources and social capital by offering individualized housing, employment, and life purpose coaching. SBS addresses the struggles many in Columbia experience to achieve employment and housing stability to become financially self-sufficient.

Mid-Missouri Legal
Services

Financial Stability Project: provide free legal education regarding consumer rights, employment, and expungements, and free legal representation to low-income people in order to help them preserve their income and achieve financial stability for their household.

FINANCIAL STABILITY

AGENCY

PROGRAM NAME AND DESCRIPTION

Job Point

Vocational Training Program: provide vocational skills training to economically-disadvantaged individuals who do not qualify for other sources of funding. The ultimate goal is to allow income-eligible citizens the opportunity to earn high wages, retain employment, achieve self-sufficiency, and enjoy greater participation in the community.

United Community
Builders

Transformations Program: Equip participants with the tools to set and pursue personal and professional goals. Inspire and support participants to secure and maintain employment or continue their education. Foster supportive relationships that sustain personal and professional growth.

HEALTH & BASIC NEEDS

We fund services that strengthen the health and well-being of individuals and families who are most vulnerable.

HEALTH & BASIC NEEDS INVESTMENT STRATEGY (2024-2026)

United Way addresses four programmatic areas necessary to achieve health and well-being: (1) Basic Needs, (2) Safe, Healthy, Affordable Housing, (3) Mental Health care, and (4) Medical and Dental Care by targeting programs that help individuals and families:

- Achieve/Maintain permanency (reunification, adoption, guardianship)
- Born at a healthy birth weight
- Develop and/or make progress toward goals to address identified needs
- Develop healthy relationships with family members/caregivers
- Develop positive values, social competencies, and positive identities
- Develop/Maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Gain knowledge about pertinent legal rights and obligations
- Gain positive parenting/co-parenting skills
- Gain strategies for enhancing safety
- Identify, manage, and appropriately express emotions and behaviors
- Improve protective factors within family
- Increase access to healthy food
- Increase knowledge of health conditions
- Increase social connectedness
- Immediate basic needs are met (food, clothing, shelter)
- Maintain or gain housing stability
- Maintain or gain independent living
- Receive age-appropriate immunizations
- Reduce risk for abuse/neglect
- Resolve immediate crisis
- Successfully able to manage mental and behavioral health conditions
- Successfully able to manage physical and oral health conditions
- Successfully linked with services



HEALTH & BASIC NEEDS

AGENCY	PROGRAM NAME AND DESCRIPTION
City of Refuge	Basic Needs Program: The program goals are to strengthen individual stability, encourage healthy behavior, and promote health improvements as we coordinate services and advocate on behalf of the needs of resettled refugees. We seek their long-term health and stability as members who belong in the Columbia community.
Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture	Opportunity Gardens: Increase consumption of healthful, culturally relevant fruits and vegetables; Increase outdoor engagement which can include the whole family; Alleviate the pressure of poverty on food choices by increasing access to healthful foods; and Increase skills, knowledge, self-esteem, and confidence. The program empowers low-income families in Boone County to grow fresh food for their family in their own backyard. Through two interdependent services, Household Gardens and Health Education, it provides a backyard garden, tools, plants, education, mentorship, and support, all at no cost to the family.
Compass Health Network	Dental Program: The program will focus on three vital service areas: oral health screenings, preventative dental care, and dental treatment services. The goal is to inspire hope and promote wellness as we serve the most vulnerable populations in our geographic service region, regardless of their ability to pay for services (or insurance status). Every individual deserves the right to affordable, high-quality, dental services and supports - this program gives low-income, vulnerable residents the ability to seek quality dental care.
First Chance for Children	C.R.I.B.S Program: The goal of the CRIBS program is to reduce sudden infant death syndrome, suffocation and entrapment deaths, child abuse and neglect and increase resilience in families by utilizing home visitation and increasing access to tangible health and safety items in times of need. Community Resources Infant Beds and Support (CRIBS) works with at-risk families in critical times. It is based on trauma-informed practices, child safety information and is a companion piece to other home visitation models.
First Chance for Children	Baby Bags Program: The goal of the Baby Bags program is to reduce child abuse and neglect and increase resilience in families by increasing access to tangible health and safety items, resources and child health information in times of need. We provide a multifaceted approach addressing the needs of entire systems associated with at risk children. Each of FC4C's programs fit together to provide holistic, wrap around support for families. Baby Bags is one of these pieces. It is based on trauma-informed practices and is designed to strengthen families by developing protective factors and providing basic necessities in times of need.

HEALTH & BASIC NEEDS

AGENCY	PROGRAM NAME AND DESCRIPTION
Heart of Missouri CASA	Child Advocacy Program: A CASA speaks up for children in the 13th Judicial Circuit Court system who've been abused or neglected by educating and empowering diverse community volunteers to advocate for them in the court system. Our goals are to improve outcomes for every child in need through best interest advocacy. We aim to ensure children remain free from re-abuse while in foster care, have all their needs met (educational, medical, therapeutic), and achieve a safe, permanent home as quickly as possible.
KVC Behavioral Health	Impact Us Program: provide tools to youth in our community to develop positive values, social competencies, and positive identities, while teaching positive youth and personal development. KVC's vision is to ensure every person is safe and connected to a strong family and a healthy community, with the mission to enrich and enhance the lives of children and families by providing medical and behavioral healthcare, social services, and education.
Love Columbia	Path Forward Program: connects relationships and resources to love people forward by 1) Providing exceptional assessment, information, referral, and case management services; 2) Enhancing the wellbeing and self-sufficiency of individuals in crisis and transition; 3) Reducing informational, relational, and material poverty in our community
Lutheran Family & Children's Services	MentalHealthServices&ParentingProgram: decrease the number of children in the region who are experiencing child abuse and neglect (CAN), by decreasing parental risk factors associated with CAN. The overall mission of the agency is to empower children and families to overcome obstacles to build a better life. The goal of reducing child abuse and neglect builds strong and stable families, in turn building strong and stable communities.
Mid-MO Legal Services	Housing Law Project: expand access to justice despite the encumbrances of poverty and prevent homelessness by providing free civil legal assistance to low-income families facing potential eviction, substandard living conditions, and unlawful actions by landlords. The Project will also provide legal information, advice, negotiation without litigation, extended representation in court and admin hearing cases, outreach, community education, increase awareness.
Services for Independent Living	Senior Connect Program: maximize the independence of low-income seniors in Boone County by providing services to improve health outcomes, increase access to resources, and grow social connections in the community. This program strives to reduce social isolation, provide access to basic needs, and keep low-income seniors safe and independent in their homes. We envision a barrier-free community for all people.

HEALTH & BASIC NEEDS

AGENCY	PROGRAM NAME AND DESCRIPTION
True North	Domestic & Sexual Violence Victims Services: keep victims of domestic and sexual violence safe and to reduce the negative impact violence has had on their lives, empowering victims to heal and thrive through education and support.
United Cerebral Palsy - Heartland	Autism Services: To help children to reach their full potential through extraordinary care and support, our program will help children build upon their strengths while decreasing behaviors that endanger their health and safety and limit opportunities for participation in activities and education.
Voluntary Action Center	Basic Needs Program: respond to the immediate basic needs of individuals and families, from birth to any given age, currently housed or experiencing homelessness, within our Columbia and Boone County community. The services within this program intend to support those who are most vulnerable to overcome economic hardships, lower stress levels, strengthen health and well-being, and achieve personal stability.
Turning Point	Day Services Center Program: clients have access to basic needs such as safe shelter, laundry, showers, hygiene items, and mail. These services, and the relationships built, provide the tools needed to restore dignity and provide hope to our most vulnerable population.