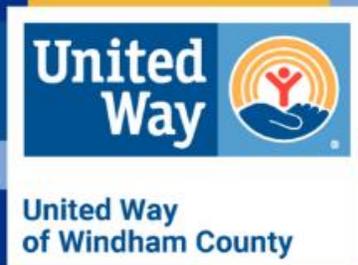


United Way of Windham County Strategic Plan FY 2022 - 2027



United Way of Windham County Strategic Planning Committee

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Letter from Governance Committee Chair

Dear Board of Directors and United Way of Windham County stakeholders:
I am pleased to share United Way of Windham County's five-year strategic plan covering fiscal years 2022 to 2027. This plan represents a four-month effort led by the Strategic Planning Committee of the Board of Directors, with engagement from the United Way Board of Directors, staff, and community stakeholders.

The Board of Directors is motivated to address big issues in our community, as reflected in the areas of priority that we have identified. The priority areas, which will drive our work and decisions over the next five years, include: health equity; diversity, equity, and inclusion; community partnerships and capacity-building; financial literacy; and children and families.

We continue to be focused on health equity with the belief that a person's ability to attain health and wellness is an essential human right. As we carry forward this strategic plan, it's worth acknowledging that our most significant achievement of the past five years is the establishment of the Windham County Dental Center. The Dental Center embodies our focus on health equity and is creating critical health equity gains in our community.

We also believe that the future strength of Windham County will be realized through fostering a more diverse community, and we are ready to dive in to support businesses, nonprofits, and community members in creating a welcoming and inclusive community for all.

As a part of this planning process, our Board and Strategic Planning committee had thoughtful and sometimes spirited discussions about United Way of Windham County's role in the community. We are pleased to have articulated how we see ourselves contributing to the landscape of mission-driven organizations. The Windham County community can count on United Way to work in partnership to respond to community needs by serving as a convener, fiscal partner, advocate, leader in response to crisis, and provider of community programming.

With the endorsement of the United Way of Windham County Board of Directors, I am pleased to share our vision for the next five years.

Sincerely,

Eilidh Pederson, MPH
Chair, Governance Committee
United Way of Windham County

Executive Summary

United Way of Windham County embarked on a strategic planning process in March, 2021, guided by the Board of Directors' Strategic Planning Committee and facilitated by this consultant. This document reflects the completion of this organizational planning process and is intended to capture this moment in the organization's history and provide a vision and guide for the next five years.

The goals of the strategic planning process, developed by the Strategic Planning Committee, were to:

- Determine unmet need in the community and determine if United Way of Windham County will play a role in having an impact in that area.
- Determine partnerships to maximize community impact.
- Identify strategic direction for fundraising and marketing to increase revenue and raise awareness for United Way of Windham County.

The three-month strategic planning process included:

- Analysis of information gathered through the 2021 Re-Imagine project.
- Stakeholder listening sessions, including focus groups of funded partners, early childhood and family organizations, groups focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion, donors, and workplace campaigns.
- Series of planning and strategy meetings with the United Way of Windham County Strategic Planning Committee.
- Half-day Board of Directors retreat.
- Focused-topic discussions with United Way of Windham County staff.
- Research and analysis including United Way trends, community needs, and existing services.

This external version of the United Way of Windham County's FY 2022-2027 Strategic Plan reflects the following:

- An updated, forward-focused vision statement and the addition of a values statement.
- Discussion of United Way of Windham County's role in the community.
- The development of long-term programmatic goals and strategies.

Thank you to the United Way of Windham County Board of Directors and staff for their engagement in this planning process, as well as the many community members who participated in the stakeholder sessions.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission: United Way of Windham County strives to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of community.

Vision: United Way of Windham County improves lives and builds stronger communities by focusing on Health, Opportunity, Prosperity, and Education—HOPE. We unite individuals, businesses, and organizations to create long-lasting, measurable change.

Values: United Way of Windham County values hope, diversity, equity, inclusion, innovation, and adaptability. These core values shape the organization’s approach to its work and align with its commitment to the community. United Way of Windham County strives to represent the community as a whole, connect resources to the greatest need, empower grassroots efforts, and hold a big picture, forward-thinking vision to guide its work.

Organization Profile and History

United Way of Windham County is proudly part of the United Way family. United Way Worldwide serves as a parent organization that sets standards, provides training and technical support, and conducts research. United Way of Windham County works to achieve its own strategic initiatives, governed and directed by a local and autonomous Board of Directors.

Established in 1958, United Way of Windham County developed a strong structure and identity through its workplace campaigns, and the organization followed the original United Way model of supporting local partner agencies through grants.

Beginning in 2001, United Way of Windham County began transitioning to a Community Impact model. Historically, United Ways worked as providers of agency funds, asking the question, “What does the agency need?” By transitioning to the Community Impact model, United Way asks the question, “What does the community need and how do we best meet that need?”

United Way of Windham County works with a variety of community partners, including businesses, nonprofits, and individuals to improve lives and meet community needs. With its extensive network, United Way of Windham County is uniquely positioned to identify gaps in services and to address them through internal initiatives and partnerships.

Around the same time as its transition to community impact, United Way of Windham County spearheaded the community response to two significant disasters: the Brooks

House fire in downtown Brattleboro which displaced dozens of low-to-moderate income residents from rental apartments and—several months later—Tropical Storm Irene, which devastated Vermont with flooding that disrupted basic infrastructure including electricity and roadways. In response to both crises, United Way of Windham County partnered with the Red Cross to facilitate the immediate response, establish funds for those in need, and coordinate long-term community recovery efforts.

In 2016, United Way of Windham County began community conversations around the need for adult dental healthcare. As a result of this planning process and the Community Health Needs Assessment, United Way of Windham County identified the need for adult dental care as a top community priority. In 2019, in partnership with Brattleboro Memorial Hospital and community dentists, the Windham County Dental Center opened and has served 1,136 Windham County residents over the past two years. As United Way of Windham County's flagship program, the Dental Center showcases the organization's ability to identify a community need, create a community response, and lead implementation when necessary.

The next five years will be an important time for United Way of Windham County, as the organization re-focuses its efforts after the enormous undertaking of launching the Dental Center. The attached plan will provide a roadmap for the coming years, framing United Way of Windham County's goals and strategies within the context of its mission and evolving role in meeting the needs of the Windham County community. This strategic plan will inform the development of annual operational plans for the next five years. Drawing on the goals outlined in this plan, United Way of Windham County staff will prioritize the strategies articulated in this document, develop timelines for their implementation, assign responsibility to staff members, and identify internal and community indicators to measure success.

Articulating United Way of Windham County's role in the community

As part of this planning process, United Way of Windham County explored its current and future role in the community, with the goal of articulating and communicating its approach to partners, donors, and other stakeholders.

In the coming five years, guided by Community Impact principles, United Way of Windham County will act as a:

- **Community convener**, bringing together and mobilizing cross-sector organizations for conversation and action in response to community needs;
- **Fiscal partner** to Windham County's mission-driven organizations as funder of programs and initiatives, fund holder of specific purpose funds, fiscal agent for new community initiatives and organizations, and lead applicant or convener for complex or collaborative funding applications;
- **Resource hub**, connecting the community to information and resources to help maintain and improve health and well-being;
- **Advocate** in order raise awareness of issues and engage stakeholders in efforts related to publicity, resources, policy, and action.
- **Leader in response to crisis** in the community, by facilitating immediate crisis response, organizing volunteers, and developing resources to promote long-term recovery; and
- **Provider** of community programs that respond to a community-identified need and directly serve members of the Windham County community.

When responding to community identified needs, United Way of Windham County will initiate, support the launch, and when possible and practical, graduate new programs. United Way of Windham County will make decisions on the extent of their direct or indirect involvement by evaluating:

- The extent of community needs and community feedback;
- Internal capacity to take on a direct role with particular attention to sustaining existing programs and working within its budget capacity;
- The community's capacity for the program, specifically the ability of other aligned organizations to provide an appropriate home for the program;
- The program's geographic reach and accessibility; and
- The extent to which the program supports equitable outcomes in alignment with United Way of Windham County's values and programmatic priorities.

United Way of Windham County articulates five programmatic goal areas later in this plan. For each goal area, United Way of Windham County expects its involvement will be a combination of the above, depending on existing community leadership, community needs, and its organizational capacity to lead or support existing and new efforts.

Program Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives outlined below align with United Way's impact areas of Health, Opportunity, Prosperity, and Education (HOPE). These goals and strategies are not intended to be a full catalog of every United Way of Windham County effort, do not reflect all continuing organizational initiatives, and are not presented in order of chronology or priority. Instead, they represent the organization's top priorities and issue areas over the next five years. The priorities were identified by exploring unmet needs in the community and analyzing United Way of Windham County's capacity to lead and/or support a community response.

1. Health Equity

Goal: Improve health equity for Windham County residents by ensuring social position or socially-defined circumstances do not disadvantage anyone from attaining their full health potential.

United Way focus area: Health

Key partners: Healthcare providers.

- **Strategy A:** Continue to support United Way of Windham County's flagship program, the Windham County Dental Center, as it transitions to nonprofit status and continues service delivery through outreach, communication, and governance support.
- **Strategy B:** Pursue and support funding for collaborative projects that advance community health equity goals.
- **Strategy C:** Leverage lessons learned from COVID-19 pandemic to drive progress towards health equity.
- **Strategy D:** Oversee Denture Fund to provide financial support for people in need of dentures.
- **Strategy E:** Explore and respond to opportunities to support community-driven initiatives focused on health equity.

2. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Goal: Increase diversity, equity, and inclusion by creating welcoming communities and workplaces.

United Way focus area: Opportunity

Key partners: Organizations working on issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- **Strategy A:** Continually analyze United Way of Windham County workplace culture and identity and make necessary changes to ensure internal workplace is diverse, equitable, and inclusive among staff, Board members, and volunteers.

- **Strategy B:** Collaborate with community partners to ensure diversity in workplace culture by providing training and coaching initiatives focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Strategy C:** Continue service and participation local committees and initiatives focusing on diverse workforce strategies.
- **Strategy D:** Explore and respond to opportunities to support community-driven initiatives focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

3. Community Partnerships and Capacity-Building

Goal: Increase the capacity of Windham County’s mission-driven organizations to respond to community needs by initiating, cultivating, and supporting community partnerships.

United Way focus area: Opportunity

Key partners: Windham County nonprofits and mission-driven organizations.

- **Strategy A:** Serve as fiscal agent for mission-driven organizations as needed.
- **Strategy B:** Solicit, provide, and manage funding and funds that respond to specific community needs and align with United Way of Windham County’s focus on equitable outcomes.
- **Strategy C:** Convene partners and facilitate nonprofit response to crisis when it arises.
- **Strategy D:** Explore and respond to opportunities to facilitate collaborative or cross-sector efforts within Windham County’s nonprofit and mission-driven community, with a particular focus on efforts that align with this plan’s areas of focus.

4. Financial Literacy

Goal: Increase the financial literacy of Windham County residents to support reduction in debt burdens, improvement in cash management, and development of assets in order to improve quality of life and household stability.

United Way focus area: Prosperity

Key partners: Windham County nonprofits and mission-driven organizations.

- **Strategy A:** Continually evaluate local implementation of Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program
- **Strategy B:** Explore and respond to opportunities to support community-driven initiatives focused on financial literacy.

5. Children and Families

Goal: Improve the lives of Windham County's children by supporting early childhood and family initiatives and collaborations.

United Way focus area: Education

Key partners: Children and family focused organizations, licensed child care centers, and registered home providers.

- **Strategy A:** Explore funding sources for early education, including the potential re-establishment of United Way Fund for Quality Early Education.
- **Strategy B:** Provide United Way of Windham County presence and, when appropriate, leadership at relevant early childhood focused settings including the Child Care Counts Coalition.
- **Strategy C:** Explore and respond to opportunities to support community-driven initiatives focused on early childhood and families.
- **Strategy D:** Explore the United @ Work program.