

**See the need. Meet the need.**



combined health  
agencies drive



United Way of Lincoln  
and Lancaster County

## **Talking Points: Community Impact Dollars**

*This document was created to help give you the information and tools to confidently answer questions from donors about giving to the United Way Impact Fund versus designating to any one particular agency.*

### **What is the United Way Impact Fund and why should I donate to it?**

The United Way Impact Fund is a pool of undesignated (the giver has not specified a particular agency as the recipient) funds that allows United Way to distribute dollars to address the community's most pressing needs in the areas of Health, Education and Financial Stability. By giving to the Impact Fund, you are ensuring that your gift will be used where it can make the biggest impact.

### **I have my favorite charities that I want to designate to.**

As you are making your pledge, we would ask that you donate to the United Way Impact Fund first. A typical family or individual in need of services will be helped by 3-4 agencies and these dollars are critical to all of the agencies that are involved. If you have additional dollars to donate, you are welcome to designate them to an organization with which you have a special connection.

Story: Eight-year-old Natalie was referred to one of United Way's partner agencies because she was routinely showing up to school late and had trouble focusing in the classroom. It was discovered that one of Natalie's parents had recently been laid off and the family was struggling with food insecurity. With the job loss, the family had also lost medical coverage. Because of this, Natalie had been living with an undiagnosed medical issue. Thanks to support from United Way donors, Natalie and her family received the support they needed to find success in the interconnected areas of Health, Education and Financial Stability.

### **Won't I have more impact by designating my pledge to a charity that I know does good work?**

All of United Way's partner agencies do incredible work. And although they are each making a difference in our community, the issues are much too great for any one agency to solve on their own. That's the power of United Way and the United Way Impact Fund. By bringing the

community together around solutions we can better equip our partner agencies to meet the need in our community.

Story: Across our community, United Way partner agencies worked harder than ever to meet growing need. Last year, 6,069,222 pounds of food were distributed by United Way funded partners.

Many of our community members never anticipated finding themselves in a position to ask for help. One such guest at Community Action's Gathering Place, a program of United Way's partner agency Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties, said that receiving dinner each night guaranteed they would have one quality meal every day. "This way," they said, "I can keep up with the bills while I'm on unemployment."

Food insecurity also affected our younger community members. When brothers Danny and Trevor learned about the CEDARS Youth Opportunity Center, which serves youth experiencing homelessness or who are in need, they walked in to seek assistance with food for their younger siblings and grandmother, whose disability check was not enough to provide for the entire family. Thanks to community support through United Way, the brothers received weekly food boxes as well as additional support and connection to services for themselves and their family.

Food insecurity also affected Lincoln residents who could not leave their homes. After accessing a mobile food distribution through the Food Bank of Lincoln, one of United Way's partner agencies, Patrick told staff that he picks up food for a few relatives who are not able to leave their houses. In June 2020, the Food Bank of Lincoln distributed a record 1,440,154 meals to hungry neighbors throughout its 16-county service area. That represents a 49% increase over the 961,533 meals distributed in June 2019.

For those in our community who don't have relatives or friends like Patrick, United Way's Ride United: Last Mile Delivery helped fill that gap. In 2020, Ride United — which previously provided only transportation access support— expanded to support deliveries of food and essential items in response to the pandemic, forming the Last Mile Delivery service. Using Dashers employed by DoorDash, Ride United Last Mile Delivery (RULMD) provides a safe and socially distanced way to get food to households in need; and relieve stress and lines at food pantries. Through RULMD, the Lincoln Veteran's Administration homeless program identified and started services for three veterans in the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program.

Lincoln is one of 20 communities across the country to participate in this program.

If you are passionate about one particular cause, such as food insecurity, consider designating to the pillar under which that cause falls (Financial Stability) which will allow multiple organizations to tackle the root cause of the issue from multiple angles. This can apply to any human service cause in our community.

By designating to *Health, Education or Financial Stability*, you are indicating what types of programs you want to impact.

### **Tools for you to help drive donations to the United Way Impact Fund**

- ePledge
- Stories of Impact
- Speakers Bureau videos, speakers mention the United Way Impact Fund and can be found at [www.unitedwaylincoln.org/campaign/](http://www.unitedwaylincoln.org/campaign/)
- ENGAGE.EMPOWER.GRADUATE.

By supporting this initiative, you are providing families the assistance they need to stabilize life at home and giving students the tools they need to reach graduation.

Together, Women United (WU) and Emerging Leaders United (ELU) are identifying and addressing the disadvantages that children and families face in local elementary school communities by giving students and their families the opportunity to succeed in school and life regardless of circumstances. Resources are focused on these key strategies:

Early Childhood Development

GOAL: Preparing children for kindergarten.

Family Engagement and Support

GOAL: Engaging parents with the school.

Adult Education

GOAL: Teaching both parents and students English.

Mental Health and Family Support

GOAL: Address behavioral and emotional barriers to learning through the support of a school-based therapist.

Extended Learning Opportunities

GOAL: Enrichment outside of the classroom to enhance development opportunities and reduce summertime grade level loss.

Youth Development

GOAL: Providing students with strong role models through mentoring relationships to foster educational engagement.

Prevention Services

GOAL: Reaching out to families in their homes to build safe environments and prevent child entrance into protective services.

- Stable. Strong. Successful.

When a student lives in a home with limited resources and survival is the day-to-day goal, parents have tough choices to make, impacting their child's ability to go to school. Providing support to families and giving them the tools they need to be stable increases school attendance and overall academic achievement.

Stable. Strong. Successful. Is an initiative that will provide targeted programs at a neighborhood level, ensuring that families will have access to much-needed resources and support to stabilize their home life.

By supporting this initiative, you are joining United Way in preventing chronic absenteeism and changing the future for students in Lincoln and Lancaster County.

- Giving to the impact areas of Health, Education and Financial Stability.
- Email templates – all mention the United Way Impact Fund and can be found at [www.unitedwaylincoln.org/campaign/](http://www.unitedwaylincoln.org/campaign/)