



Community Impact Agenda 2027–2029

Our North Star

A Meriden and Wallingford where individuals and families have the resources, opportunities, and support they need to move from crisis to stability—and from stability to a thriving future.

Our Role

United Way of Meriden and Wallingford brings people, organizations, businesses, government, and resources together to address our communities' most pressing challenges.

We will focus our resources where United Way can make the greatest difference by:

- **Convening** partners around shared community priorities
- **Investing** in effective programs and organizations
- **Connecting** residents to resources and opportunities
- **Mobilizing** volunteers, donors, businesses, and community leaders
- **Elevating community voices** and advocating for solutions that strengthen families
- **Measuring results** so that investments are tied to meaningful community outcomes

OUR FOUR COMMUNITY IMPACT PRIORITIES

1. FINANCIAL SECURITY

Helping families move from financial crisis to stability and opportunity

Too many working households struggle to afford housing, food, child care, transportation, health care, utilities, and other necessities. United Way will prioritize strategies that strengthen the financial stability of individuals and families.

Our Goals

- Help families meet essential needs while working toward long-term stability.

- Increase access to employment, workforce training, and career advancement.
- Help households retain more of their income and build financial resilience.
- Connect residents to benefits, tax assistance, financial education, and other supports.

Strategies

Support and develop initiatives addressing:

- Workforce development and job readiness
- Financial coaching and education
- Free tax preparation
- Access to public and community benefits
- Transportation and child care barriers to employment
- Emergency assistance that prevents families from falling into deeper crisis
- Food security
- Housing and utility stability

Success Measures

We will track indicators such as households receiving stabilization assistance, housing crises prevented, residents connected with employment or training, tax refunds and benefits secured, and households reporting improved financial stability.

2. YOUTH OPPORTUNITY

Ensuring every young person has the opportunity to succeed

Children and young people thrive when they have strong families, supportive schools, positive relationships, and access to enriching opportunities.

Our Goals

- Prepare young people for college, careers, and adulthood.
- Support academic success and literacy.
- Expand access to safe, high-quality after-school and summer opportunities.
- Strengthen youth mental health and emotional well-being.

Strategies

Invest in and convene partners around:

- Career exploration, internships, and workforce exposure
- Youth leadership
- Literacy and academic support
- Parent and family engagement
- Mentoring
- After-school and summer enrichment
- Sports, arts, and recreation opportunities
- Social-emotional wellness

Success Measures

Measures may include children participating in high-quality enrichment programs, literacy and academic outcomes, school engagement, youth connected with mentors, students participating in career-development opportunities, and youth reporting stronger confidence and well-being.

3. COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

Building a stronger, more connected community prepared to respond to challenges

Strong communities have trusted organizations, connected residents, coordinated services, and the ability to respond quickly when individuals or the community experience a crisis.

Our Goals

- Ensure residents know where to turn when they need help.
- Strengthen collaboration among local nonprofit and community organizations.
- Improve community preparedness and crisis response.
- Mobilize volunteers around meaningful community needs.
- Strengthen the capacity of organizations serving Meriden and Wallingford.

Strategies

United Way will:

- Strengthen connections to **211 and local resources**
- Convene nonprofit, municipal, school, health, faith, and business partners
- Identify gaps and reduce duplication in community services
- Coordinate community responses to emerging needs
- Mobilize volunteers and corporate partners
- Support nonprofit capacity-building
- Develop collaborative initiatives when no single organization can solve a challenge alone

Success Measures

We will track resource connections, volunteer engagement, collaborative initiatives, partners participating in coordinated efforts, emerging needs addressed, and dollars or resources mobilized for the community.

A LOCAL FOCUS: ALICE FAMILIES

Across all four priorities, United Way of Meriden & Wallingford will maintain a particular focus on **ALICE households—Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed**.

These are households earning above the federal poverty level but still struggling to afford the basic costs of living.

Our goal is not simply to help families survive the next emergency.

Our goal is to help create pathways from crisis → stability → opportunity.

This means combining immediate assistance with strategies that address the underlying conditions affecting financial security.

HOW WE WILL CREATE GREATER IMPACT

1. Listen to the Community

Regularly engage residents, nonprofit organizations, schools, municipal leaders, businesses, health providers, and other stakeholders to understand changing needs.

2. Use Data to Guide Investments

Use ALICE data, 211 trends, local data, partner outcomes, and community input to determine priorities and identify gaps.

3. Fund Outcomes, Not Just Programs

Move toward community investments that clearly demonstrate how programs contribute to one or more Community Impact Agenda outcomes.

4. Convene Around Big Issues

Use United Way's unique position to bring organizations and sectors together around challenges that cannot be solved by one organization alone.

5. Mobilize the Community

Give businesses, donors, volunteers, and residents meaningful ways to participate in creating change.

6. Tell the Story of Collective Impact

Report not only how many people were served, but what changed because United Way and its partners acted together.

OUR COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES

United Way investments should increasingly demonstrate:

Need

Does the program address a clearly identified community need?

Impact

Can the organization demonstrate meaningful results?

Collaboration

Does the organization work with others and avoid unnecessary duplication?

Access

Can residents who need the service realistically access it?

Sustainability

Does the investment build long-term community capacity rather than simply respond to repeated crises?

Alignment

Does the work advance one or more priorities in this Community Impact Agenda?

OUR VISION FOR SUCCESS

By 2029, United Way of Meriden & Wallingford will be recognized not simply as an organization that raises and distributes money, but as a **community impact leader that brings people and resources together to solve problems.**

We will know we are succeeding when:

More families are financially stable.

More children and young people have opportunities to succeed.

More residents can access the resources needed to live healthy lives.

Our nonprofit network is stronger and more connected.

Businesses and residents have meaningful ways to make a difference.

And Meriden and Wallingford are stronger because we worked together.

UNITED IS THE WAY.

Local people. Local solutions. Measurable impact.