



United Way Impact Areas: Overview

By focusing on four key building blocks - education, financial stability, health, and basic needs - we are ensuring that families have what they need to thrive in Mower County. United Way support offers a 'full-circle' effect for Mower County. A strong economy depends on the good health of its citizens. Healthy people may be better able to work and secure higher levels of education, which contributes to personal wealth and regional prosperity. And when basic needs are met, we all prosper.

Impact Area	All
Goal	Healthy communities = strong communities
Reality <i>Source: County Health Rankings</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and environmental factors account for more than 80% of all health outcomes • Mower County is ranked among the least healthy counties in Minnesota <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ranked 64th out of 87 for health outcomes (length and quality of life) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Length = 55/87 ▪ Quality = 70/87 ○ Ranked 69th out of 87 for health factors (social and environmental determinants) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health behaviors = 49/87 ▪ Clinical care = 56/87 ▪ Social and economic factors = 69/87 ▪ Physical environment = 58/87
Our Efforts	<p>Social determinants of health guide strategic investments in four impact areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Financial Stability • Health • Basic Needs <p>Funded programs and initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38 programs coordinated externally by 23 local nonprofits • 6 programs coordinated internally by United Way • Several community coalitions United Way leads or is part of
Our Impact	23,980+ social service interactions recorded with Mower County residents in 2021





Access to quality education is vital to child development, lifelong learning, and regional economic growth. United Way understands that barriers exist in our community that impact one's ability to obtain quality education, so we continually strive to address these issues by ensuring equal opportunities exist for all.

Impact Area	Education	
Goal + Outcomes	<p>Improve lifelong learning and development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address social, emotional, mental, and physical barriers to success for all learners • Ensure all learners will be challenged to achieve their academic potential • Encourage all learners to explore areas of personal interest and prepare for post-secondary education or career • Support and enhance parents and mentors in their role as primary influencers of our learners 	
Mower Reality <i>Source: MN Compass</i>	<p>3rd grade students achieving reading standards: 36%</p> <p>8th grade students achieving math standards: 23%</p> <p>High school students graduating on time: 81%</p> <p>Individuals speaking English less than very well: 10%</p>	
Our Efforts	<p>Organization</p> <p>Boy Scouts</p> <p>Crime Victims Resource Center</p> <p>Girl Scouts</p> <p>Hormel Historic Home</p> <p>LIFE Mower County</p> <p>LIFE Mower County</p> <p>Mower Council for the Handicapped</p> <p>Mower County Seniors</p> <p>Parenting Resource Center</p> <p>Parenting Resource Center</p> <p>ServeMinnesota</p> <p>YMCA of Austin</p>	<p>Program</p> <p>Austin Scoutreach</p> <p>Children's Prevention Programs</p> <p>Community Engagement Programs</p> <p>Autism Friendly Austin Initiative</p> <p>Advocacy and Family Services</p> <p>Our Place Recreation Center</p> <p>Advocacy</p> <p>Advocacy</p> <p>Welcome Center</p> <p>Partnering with Parents</p> <p>Minnesota Reading Corps</p> <p>Youth/Teen Center</p>
Examples of Impact <i>Year: 2021</i>	<p>74 third graders boosted reading proficiency to grade level</p> <p>1,451 community members received services at the Welcome Center</p> <p>608 adults participated in parent education classes</p>	
Story	<p>"Working as a K-3 Reading Corps tutor has been an amazing experience for this long-time teacher, because now they are able to see readers blossom each day and in real time. Describing their experience, Meredith said, 'Each day, my students and I take a minute or two to discuss what we are reading at home or in class. We are excited to share how reading makes our lives better. Then, we get to work. In the few short months that I have been working with my students, I have seen huge growth. I LOVE being able to work one on one with each student and see their excitement and confidence grow as they discover that reading IS fun and that they ARE good at it. I love every day that I get to work with my students. I love doing so through Reading Corps, where my students aren't boxes to be checked off, but kids I am building relationships with, and who are building their relationship with reading thanks to United Way.'" – ServeMinnesota</p>	





United Way empowers people to become financially independent so that our entire community can thrive. Those living in financially unstable homes frequently struggle when it comes to other foundational basic needs. Without a stable income, people can find themselves falling behind rather than moving forward.

Impact Area	Financial Stability	
Goal + Outcomes	Provide individuals with the knowledge and skills to earn a living wage and gain financial stability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to basic needs for employment • Increase access to education and or job training • Increase financial literacy skills 	
Mower Reality <i>Source: MN Compass</i>	Individuals in poverty: 14% Children in poverty: 19% Seniors in poverty: 10% Households burdened by childcare costs: 23%	
Our Efforts	Organization Apple Lane Child Care Center Cedar Valley Services Cedar Valley Services Independent Management Services Parenting Resource Center Southern MN Regional Legal Services Workforce Development	Program Child Care Scholarships Community/Supported Employment Competitive Placement Financial Coaching Program Child Care Scholarships Government Benefits Workforce Success
Examples of Impact <i>Year: 2021</i>	134 low-income families were able to afford childcare through sliding fee scales 191 unemployed individuals were placed in jobs and coached by career navigators 150 community members participated in financial literacy programs	
Story	<p>"Imagine getting a job offer and the excitement, anticipation, and hope that comes along with it. Now imagine not being able to take that job offer because you lack the basic essential supplies to do the work. They might be something as simple as black non-skid shoes, steel-toed boots, or fuel in your vehicle to make it to work the first two weeks until that much-anticipated, first paycheck comes in. For many people, coming up with the money to start a new job, especially when you have been unemployed stands between them and accepting a job offer. In Austin, we have found that some of the biggest needs require a small amount of support service funding to make a significant impact. Thanks to funding from the United Way, staff in the Austin Workforce Development office are able to support residents of Mower County who are seeking employment or who are recently employed with limited support services. In its fourth year of operation, the United Way Workforce Success Program has served over 500 people with an average cost of \$75. The impact of this program is immeasurable; it has changed lives, families, and impacted our community." – Workforce Development</p>	





Staying healthy both physically and mentally is essential to living a great life. Without good health, people face roadblocks around employment and education and are unable to become their best selves. Healthy communities are strong communities, so we must work to improve health and wellbeing county-wide.

Impact Area	Health	
Goal + Outcomes	Increase healthy behaviors and wellness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to affordable health care • Increase access to non-hospital illness programs/services • Increase access to programs that improve physical and mental fitness 	
Mower Reality <i>Source: MN Compass</i>	Individuals without health insurance: 8% County ranking for access to mental health services: 74 out of 87 Population without adequate access to food: 9% Children with at least one untreated decayed tooth: 20%	
Our Efforts	Organization Adams Area Ambulance Children's Dental Health Services Children's Dental Health Services Crime Victims Resource Center Independent Management Services LIFE Mower County Mower Council for the Handicapped Nexus-Gerard Family Healing Recovery Is Happening	Program Ambulance Service Healthy Teeth Happy Teeth Victim Services Mental Health Special Olympics Equipment Lending Program Mental Health Recovery On A Mission
Examples of Impact <i>Year: 2021</i>	1,066 low-income children received free dental care 483 uninsured individuals received low or no cost mental health care 335 pieces of medical equipment were loaned free of charge to community members in need	
Story	<p>At the time of their preventative care services, Jerece and Jerrell received a dental exam from a dentist who identified they had extensive urgent restorative needs that needed to be treated as soon as possible. CDHS staff worked with the boys' teachers and family to schedule appointments and the unhealthy teeth were treated. Now that Jerece and Jerrell have healthy mouths free of dental cavities, they don't have to worry about missing any of the estimated 51 million school hours other students are missing each year in the United States due to dental pain. Jerece and Jerrell story has a happy ending, however too many children in our community are facing tooth pain each day. Thanks to United Way, CDHS can continually work to improve access for children who have restorative care needs."</p> <p>- Children's Dental Health Services</p>	





If education, financial stability, and health are the pillars of a good quality of life, then basic needs are the foundation. Without basic needs, kids struggle to focus in school, adults aren't able to be at work consistently, and reaching everyone's full potential is impossible. Together we strive to stabilize lives.

Impact Area	Basic Needs	
Goal + Outcomes	Provide food, clothing, and shelter to stabilize lives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to nutritious meals • Increase access to services that allow for independent living • Increase access to shelter • Increase children's access to safe environment 	
Mower Reality <i>Source: MN Compass</i>	Households burdened by rental costs: 47% Individuals who are food insecure: 1 in 10 adults, 1 in 7 children Households with no vehicle: 7% Women affected by domestic violence: 1 in 4	
Our Efforts	Organization Apple Lane Child Care Center CLUES Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota Mower County Seniors Mower County Seniors Parenting Resource Center Parenting Resource Center Semcac The Salvation Army The Salvation Army	Program Hot Lunch Program Canasta Familiar Rural Immigration Project Chore Program Senior Transportation Seibel Center Helping Homes Semcac Senior Nutrition Emergency Housing Community Meals
Examples of Impact <i>Year: 2021</i>	80 children from unstable homes were placed in temporary care 4,800 residents received food support 651 victims of domestic violence were connected with advocacy and support services	
Story	<p>"I met with a mother who was no longer able to care for her children due to domestic violence in the home and other stressors that compromised the mother's emotional and physical well-being. I could tell she was at a point of complete exhaustion and on the verge of homelessness, so we accommodated her children with Helping Homes services so she could rest in a safe place and start attending counseling sessions. The children were placed in a Helping Home together and experienced security and stability that they had not experienced for quite some time. The mother expressed gratitude for our services and appreciated that we were allowing her to take care of her mental health while she went through this stressful process. Furthermore, she created a self-care plan including recognition of physical and emotional symptoms she started to experience when she was undergoing chronic stress. The family has since been reunited and, thanks to United Way funding, a Helping Home was there for them when they needed it most." - Parenting Resource Center (Helping Homes)</p>	

