

NEWS RELEASE

**United Way of
Jackson County**
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United Way Invests \$841,667 in Programs Tackling Financial Stability, Basic Needs

30 Programs Address Financial Literacy, Education, 2-1-1 and More

JACKSON, Michigan (April 20, 2017) – United Way of Jackson County will invest \$841,667 in 30 programs addressing financial stability and basic needs among vulnerable individuals and families over the coming year.

“We’re investing the resources entrusted to us to drive change in some of the biggest needs our community faces,” said Ken Toll, President and CEO of UWJC.

These are the first grants made under UWJC’s financial stability focus, which was unveiled last year. Since then, United Way has developed a community-level vision, a measurable goal to ensure progress, and helped lead the creation of the Financial Stability Network to tackle poverty and economic hardship countywide.

“The common thread in every social issue we face in Jackson County is financial instability—people in poverty or one unexpected bill away from poverty,” Toll said. “We’ve seen time and time again that when the people of Jackson County rally around issues, we can solve them. That’s the heart of our collective work.”

Toll said UWJC received 51 requests for funding, totaling \$1.9 million—more than double the amount available. A group of community volunteers reviewed every request to make sure each one advanced vulnerable people on a path toward financial stability. The volunteers’ recommendations were forwarded to the UWJC Board of Directors for approval.

“These were hard decisions. We heard from many great organizations doing valuable work. None of the volunteers wanted to say ‘no’ to anyone. But the need was greater than the funds at hand. For the future, we hope more people will support United Way so we can make bigger investments and see greater results,” said Toll.

New Programs & Partners

A total of 30 programs involving 21 partner agencies received funding. Investments focused on key strategies:

- Backbone support—systems level change and coordination of services;
- Basic needs—meeting basic needs and barriers to employment;
- Activities for families—safe and inclusive activities for children and families;
- Inform and engage—increasing understanding of issues around poverty;
- Support adult education and skill-building.

A complete list of programs is available online at uwjackson.org.

In addition to advancing financial stability, Toll said programs that received funding were assessed for how well they addressed equity, diversity and inclusion—that is, whether they deal with the disparities faced by specific groups due to ethnicity, culture, gender, age and other determinants. “We’re working for a community that’s diverse, inclusive and equitable for all,” said Toll.

Programs that receive funding must include progress reports on specific, measurable goals throughout the year. Toll said this allows UWJC to ensure the investments made are delivering meaningful change and building pathways for people to become financially stable.

“Our goal is to help 5,000 Jackson County residents develop a pathway to financial success by 2025. The only way to get there is through strategic programs and partnerships that bring hope to all people in our community,” Toll said.

About United Way of Jackson County

United Way of Jackson County mobilizes people, organizations and funds to create a community rich in opportunities to eliminate poverty and allow all people to achieve financial stability and success. We are committed to helping 5,000 Jackson County residents develop a pathway to financial success by 2025. Visit our website at www.uwjackson.org, or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

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