



UNITED WAY
Coastal and Western
Connecticut



**ANNUAL
REPORT**

24-25

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FROM OUR CEO & BOARD CHAIR

To Our Community,

As we reflect on this past year, we are deeply inspired by the strength and resilience of our community and by what we have achieved together. The year has been one of both progress and purpose, a time when we turned our shared commitment into measurable change for thousands of households across Fairfield and Litchfield Counties.

At United Way Coastal and Western Connecticut (UWCWC), we believe that when we address today's needs while building pathways for tomorrow, we create real and lasting impact. Together with our partners, donors, and volunteers, we continued to invest in families, strengthen community systems, and advance policies that help every person, especially our most vulnerable neighbors—those living at or below the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) Threshold—gain stability and opportunity.

Because of your support, more families were able to access quality education, healthy food, financial assistance, and so much more. We strengthened partnerships across more than 200 nonprofits, invested millions of dollars in community initiatives, and helped advance key policy areas that create greater equity and opportunity for all.

These collective efforts demonstrate what is possible when we work together toward a shared vision. They show that every hour volunteered, every dollar invested, and every voice raised has the power to create lasting change.

Together, we are building a stronger, healthier, and more equitable future for every person in our community. Thank you for standing with us in this important work.

With gratitude,



Isabel

Isabel Almeida
President & CEO



Carolyn

Carolyn Kobsa
Board Chair

OUR IMPACT

IMPACT MODEL

In partnership with community, we address critical needs and advance equitable pathways to well-being and financial security for everyone.

To create meaningful and lasting change in our community, United Way Coastal and Western Connecticut employs a comprehensive strategy that centers around our commitment to equity and community and includes addressing both critical needs and creating long-term lasting change.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY AND COMMUNITY

United Way Coastal and Western Connecticut is committed to building our community into a place where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. We prioritize and leverage our strong partnership with the community to ensure our work is improving lives and creating a future of greater inclusion and equity.



We invested more than
\$4,412,000
directly into our community.

Stabilizing Families Through Financial Assistance

Direct Assistance for Basic Needs

United Way provides rapid, flexible cash assistance to help low-to-moderate-income households, especially ALICE families, manage unexpected crises. When traditional resources fall short, this direct support helps cover urgent expenses like food, housing, utilities, or child care. Many ALICE families earn too much to qualify for government aid but still live one emergency away from instability. By offering immediate relief, we ensure families can make essential choices with dignity and autonomy.

But beyond meeting immediate needs, this assistance helps prevent eviction, maintain employment, avoid utility shutoffs, and reduce financial stress—creating stability that lasts beyond the crisis itself.

In 2024-25 financial assistance didn't just reach families— it changed outcomes:

\$362,000

in direct assistance helped keep families housed, connected to utilities, and able to care for their children, preventing financial emergencies from becoming long-term setbacks

1,418 individuals

gained short-term stability at moments when a single bill or unexpected expense could have derailed employment, education, or health.



United Way provided life-changing support for me and my family during one of our most difficult moments. Their assistance helped cover a necessary car repair and past-due utility bills, relieving a heavy financial burden and restoring stability. More than the financial help, it gave me dignity, hope, and the confidence to move forward.

Theresa, ALICE Fund Recipient



Expanding Access to Quality Child Care

Every child deserves a strong start, and Cora's Kids is making that a reality by increasing access to high-quality, affordable child care. This initiative supports family child care providers—many of whom are minority women and first-generation entrepreneurs—in obtaining licensing, business training, and professional development. In doing so, Cora's Kids not only strengthens the child care workforce but also provides working families with safe, reliable care options.

But the impact goes beyond expanding slots. By helping providers gain credentials, improve quality, and strengthen their businesses, Cora's Kids is **increasing the supply of sustainable child care, improving early learning environments, and supporting families' long-term economic mobility.**

In 2024-25, Cora's Kids created measurable improvements for families, providers, and children:

150 family child care providers

received licensing, business training, or professional development, leading to stronger, more sustainable small businesses—and more safe, high-quality options for families.

790+ licensed child care slots

created since 2018, giving hundreds of families access to stable, high-quality care that enables parents to keep working and maintain their household income.

900+ children

gained access to environments that support early learning, healthy development, and school readiness, ensuring more children enter kindergarten prepared to thrive.

20 community messengers

were trained in 2024-2025 to share early childhood resources, helping families recognize developmental milestones sooner and connect to services earlier.

Improving Access to Food

United Way is committed to ensuring that families don't have to choose between paying bills and putting healthy meals on the table. Through a combination of direct financial assistance, partnerships, and innovative food access programs, we are helping individuals and families meet their basic nutritional needs while improving long-term health outcomes.

Senior Food Security Program in Partnership with CIFIC

UWCWC's Senior Food Security Program tackles food insecurity among older adults by improving access to fresh, affordable food and supporting long-term financial stability. The pilot program partnered with our local Federally Qualified Health Centers to reduce barriers and connect people to social service benefits like SNAP. For those who were food insecure but not eligible for SNAP, the ALICE Fund provides direct food assistance through cards that can be used at a variety of accessible, culturally relevant retailers.



This work met a critical need for older adults struggling with food insecurity and provided stability during moments of crisis.

\$44,940 provided to **57 households** in direct financial assistance, helping them purchase food each month.

90% of participants reported **significant or severe food insecurity** prior to receiving help.

96% reported that their wellbeing improved as a result of this program



Because of the program, I felt calm and was able to buy the fruits and vegetables I needed. It feels really good to know that you have everything you need to feed yourself.

-Anonymous Participant



For participants, the program helped:



Remove barriers to healthy, consistent food access



Improve food security and confidence



Support healthier eating habits



Strengthen physical and mental wellbeing



It felt really good to know I had everything I needed to feed myself, and having that support gave me peace because I didn't have to worry about food at home.

-Anonymous Participant

Innovating at the Intersection of Health and Food



Food Farmacy of Greater Danbury

Opened in November 2023, the Food Farmacy of Greater Danbury is a first-of-its-kind food as medicine partnership between Nuance Health, Connecticut Institute for Communities, and Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut/Community Food Rescue. The program supports patients managing chronic conditions, especially hypertension, by making healthy eating accessible, affordable, and sustainable.



A Two-Pronged Approach

- 1 Healthy Food Access**
Participants receive free, fresh, nutritious food twice each month, aligned with heart-healthy guidelines. This reduces financial stress and ensures families can consistently access the foods needed to support better health.
- 2 Personalized Nutrition Support**
Registered dietitians provide one-on-one coaching, education, and ongoing support, helping participants learn how to shop, cook, and eat in ways that improve long-term health.

In 2024-25, the Food Farmacy of Greater Danbury:

121 families

received personalized care, allowing them to **better manage chronic health conditions** without taking on additional financial burdens.

458 consultations

with registered dietitians helped **participants gain healthier eating habits** and improved disease management.

1,838 food visits

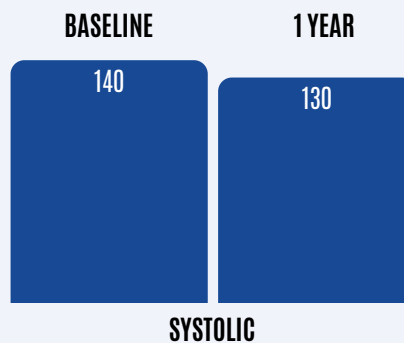
ensured families had consistent **access to healthy, nutritious food**, reducing the need to choose between groceries and other essential expenses.

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

↓ **9.3 MMHG SBP REDUCTION**

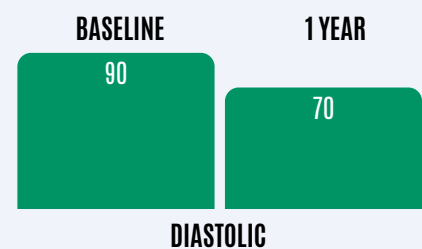
↓ **79% REPORT LESS STRESS**

↓ **4.6 MMHG DBP REDUCTION**



SO WHAT?

The Food Farmacy isn't just helping people access food – it's measurably improving health, reducing stress, and preventing costly medical complications by using food as a true part of healthcare.



I have quite a few medical conditions along with congestive heart failure and I can't eat salt, added sugar, or a lot of additives because they affect me. I wasn't eligible for SNAP benefits but through the Food Farmacy, I am able to get enough fresh food to last me for two weeks. It's just been a godsend.

Don, Food Farmacy Recipient



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Community Engagement

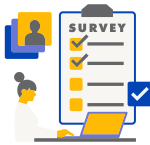
Community engagement is at the heart of our work, creating space to listen, learn, and bring leaders together to understand local needs and shape collaborative solutions through efforts like:

In 2024-25, our engagement efforts strengthened community voice and collaboration:



300 leaders came together during 15 gatherings

These convenings didn't just spark conversation, they strengthened relationships, surfaced shared challenges, and led to new collaborations across organizations. Leaders reported that these sessions helped them better coordinate services, reduce duplication, and identify opportunities for collective action.



200 nonprofits, community members, and stakeholders

engaged through our **community survey** to provide feedback on pressing needs and emerging trends across our region. These insights are now **informing future funding priorities, strategic planning, and system-level initiatives**, ensuring that our work reflects the lived experience of the community.



United Way's leadership in convening Community Leader Coffees creates space for nonprofit leaders to connect, share, and strengthen one another. In that spirit of collaboration, we were encouraged to celebrate wins even in difficult times, honoring our shared commitment to families and the collective strength that sustains our community and its leaders.

Danielle Marchione, The Child & Family Guidance Center



Volunteers supported nonprofit capacity

Volunteers fuel community change with their time, energy, and compassion. This year, thousands of families and nonprofits benefited from the support of residents who stepped forward to pack food, assemble hygiene kits, prepare holiday care packages, and strengthen programs across our region. Their service not only expanded capacity for local organizations but also ensured essential resources reached neighbors quickly and efficiently.

1,365 volunteers

expanded nonprofit capacity by supporting hands-on projects across the region helping organizations deliver services more efficiently and reach more families than they could with staff alone.

X

11,004 hours

increased the service reach of local nonprofits, providing the equivalent labor of multiple full-time staff positions and enabling partners to respond faster to community needs.

=

\$382,830

capturing the **economic value volunteers add**, which allows nonprofits to invest more resources directly into food, housing, child care, and other essential supports.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Agewell Community Council

United Way serves as the backbone organization for the AgeWell Community Council, a collaborative group of agencies and organizations working to promote healthy aging and improve the well-being of older adults in Danbury.

In 2024-2025, the Council:

- **Increased awareness of safety risks** by hosting expert speakers and delivering fraud-prevention presentations that helped older adults recognize scams and stay protected.
- **Identified levels of social isolation** among Danbury's older adults through a community survey that gave partners clearer insight into who is most at risk and where support is needed.
- **Enhanced partner capacity to support healthy aging** by coordinating learning opportunities that improved knowledge, alignment, and responsiveness across agencies serving older adults.

Food Collaboratives

United Way supports the Danbury Food Collaborative (DFC) and Stamford Food Collaborative (SFC). These are community-led coalitions working to improve access to fresh, affordable, and culturally appropriate food. Made up of nonprofits, public agencies, funders, and other partners, these collaboratives address immediate food needs while advancing long-term solutions. Both played key roles in statewide advocacy, including the School Meals for All CT Campaign and the Connecticut Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, and Opportunity's Food Insecurity in Connecticut report, helping shape food policy and elevate local voices.

Danbury & Stamford Food Collaboratives

- Strengthened regional coordination through **20 collaborative meetings** that engaged more than **70 partners**—including nonprofits, public agencies, schools, funders, and faith communities—to align efforts and reduce fragmentation in food access system.
- **Improved data-driven decision-making** by piloting the **Data Modernization Project**, mapping local food services, identifying gaps, and reducing duplication across Danbury's food access network.
- **Expanded access to culturally relevant food as nearly 12,000 individuals** received fresh holiday meals through the Thanksgiving Feeding Gratitude Project, supported by coordinated distribution across Danbury Food Collaborative partners.
- **Elevated community voice in statewide food policy** through advocacy efforts, interfaith convenings, and a unified Marketing Strategy Plan that strengthened awareness, expanded reach, and helped shape Connecticut's approach to food insecurity.



CAPACITY BUILDING & GRANTS

United Way invests in building the strength and sustainability of the local nonprofit ecosystem. By providing grants, technical support, and backbone coordination, we help organizations deliver stronger services, expand their reach, and improve outcomes for residents across our region.

Grant Management

Our work spans basic needs, early childhood, workforce development, food security, housing stability, and systems-level initiatives, all grounded in data, equity, and community voice.

- **Advanced community-driven initiatives through Impact Philanthropy & Community Grants** that funded programs addressing food insecurity, housing stability, financial assistance, health access, and civic engagement—**helping residents gain greater stability and opportunity.**
- **Expanded services for Danbury residents** by administering the City of Danbury Social Service Grants, supporting 25 **nonprofit agencies** providing housing stability, mental health services, and food assistance—reaching more than **30,000 residents in 2024-2025.**
- Delivered critical emergency support by **administering \$397,387 in Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) funds** across multiple jurisdictions, ensuring families in crisis received **timely assistance with food, shelter, rent, and utilities.**

Community investments ensure:



Nonprofits are able to serve more people, more effectively.



Community-led solutions became stronger and more sustainable



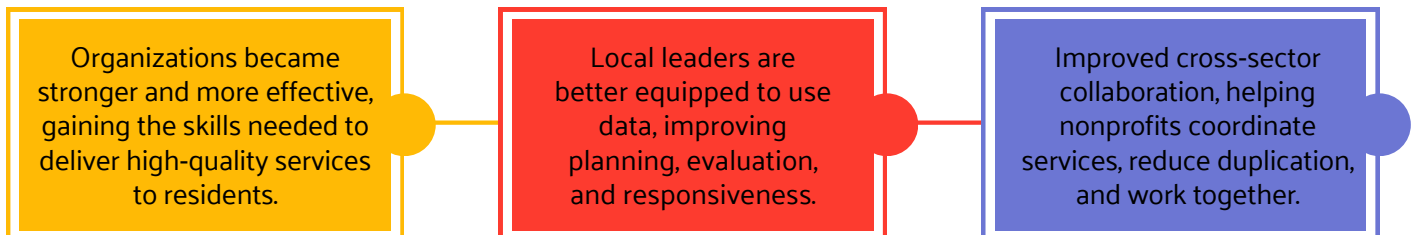
Residents receive timely support and immediate relief during crises.

Nonprofit & Community Partner Support

Our investment extends beyond grant dollars to include the systems, skills, and relationships nonprofits need to thrive.

- **Technical Assistance & Capacity Building** | Providing tools, training, and individualized support to help grassroots and community-based organizations grow their impact and sustainability.
- **Collective Action & Learning Communities** | Convening cross-sector networks to foster shared learning, data-informed strategies, and collaborative problem solving.

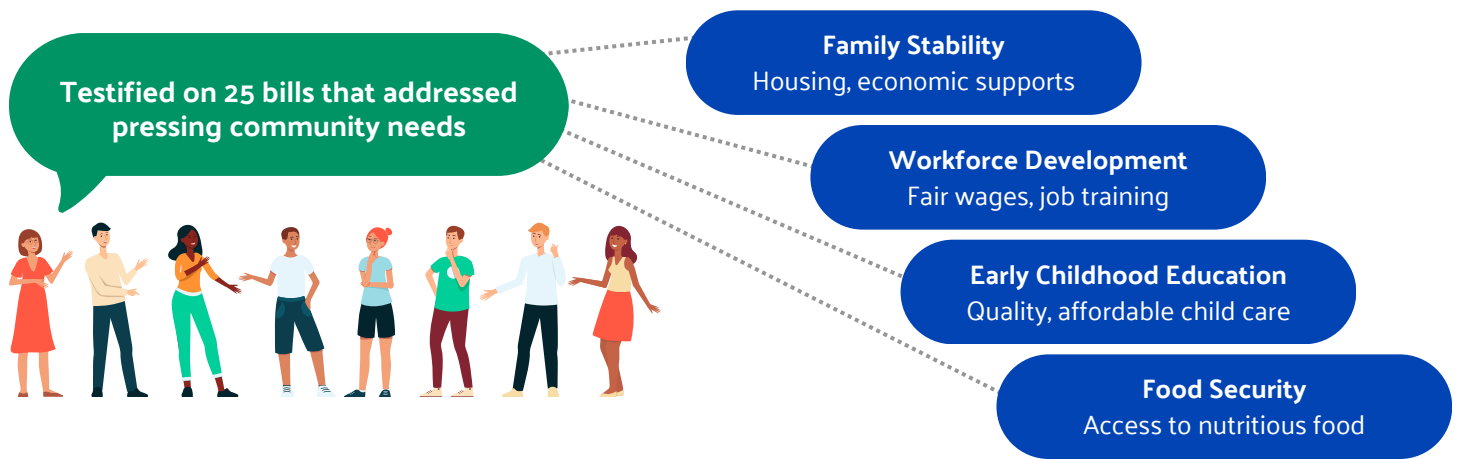
With these supports:



PUBLIC POLICY & ADVOCACY

We recognize that lasting progress depends on strengthening the systems that shape people’s lives. Long-term stability requires thoughtful policy and advocacy that address the root causes of financial hardship, not just the symptoms. Through close partnerships with policymakers, nonprofits, and community leaders, we work to advance solutions that create real opportunity for every household.

Our advocacy efforts focused on building relationships and centering community voice in policymaking. We engaged our full state delegation, making critical issues impossible for policymakers to ignore.



These efforts helped secure **two significant victories** for families: a **strengthened Earned Income Tax Credit**, putting more money back into the pockets of low-income workers, and a new **Early Childhood Education Endowment** to stabilize and expand access to high-quality child care.



“ We want to make sure that the investments we know are needed to fix the child care crisis go above and beyond the status quo to make sure that we are really addressing the issues of affordability, accessibility, and quality of child care for all kids.

Tida Infahsaeng, Sr. Director of Advocacy and Partnerships

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

UWCWC is proud to backbone three Cradle to Career collective impact initiatives: Bridgeport Prospers, Stamford Cradle to Career, and the Danbury Collective. These partnerships bring together school districts, nonprofits, families, local government, businesses, and community leaders to align around shared goals, address systemic inequities, and improve outcomes in education, health, and economic mobility. Through these three initiatives, **we help strengthen the systems that support more than 84,000 children across Bridgeport, Danbury, and Stamford.** By aligning partners, elevating community voice, and focusing on data-driven strategies, these collaborations work to create lasting pathways to opportunity from early childhood through career.

Beyond these local efforts, UWCWC works in close collaboration with two additional StriveTogether communities, Norwalk ACTS and Waterbury Bridge to Success Partnership, and facilitates the Connecticut Cradle to Career Coalition. This statewide policy collaborative unites five StriveTogether partnerships, 15 working groups, and more than 440 partner organizations. **Together, the coalition reaches 125,000 children across Bridgeport, Danbury, Norwalk, Stamford, and Waterbury.**



Bridgeport Prospers advances equitable change and promotes the well-being of Bridgeport's children, youth, and families through authentic partnerships with civic, community, and organizational leaders. In collaboration with UWCWC and the CT Cradle to Career Coalition, the partnership strengthens civic infrastructure, aligns systems, and centers community leadership to improve outcomes across the cradle-to-career continuum.

FY2025 Highlights:

- Engaged residents across Bridgeport with support from 98 community volunteers.
- Launched 7 CARE community health leadership and impact projects and trained 15 CARE Health Leaders.
- Implemented a dual Community Health Worker Doula certification program, training 10 CHW Doulas.
- Mobilized 62 Community Leaders, including 15 CARE Health Leaders, 15 Community Messengers, 10 CHW/Doulas, 7 Parent Ambassadors, and 15 Youth Ambassadors focused on civic engagement and policy advocacy.
- Established a NAMI Greater Bridgeport affiliate and recruited a Board of Directors to lead local mental health advocacy and awareness.

DANBURY COLLECTIVE

The Danbury Collective is a community-led partnership fostering positive, measurable, and sustainable life outcomes for Danbury children, families, and young adults. Guided by a shared vision of equitable access to opportunity, the Collective aligns cross-sector partners, community members, and youth to advance systems change and strengthen outcomes across the cradle-to-career continuum.

FY2025 Highlights:

- Achieved membership in the StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network.
- Engaged 100+ community members across network groups focused on Early Childhood Education, Chronic Absenteeism and Learner Engagement, Youth Mental Health, Civic Engagement.
- Launched a community-wide campaign to reduce chronic absenteeism and delivered 11 trainings reaching 270 participants.
- Delivered a six-part civic engagement training series reaching 100 community members.
- Secured a grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation to participate in a multi-month regional viability study guiding future investment.



Stamford Cradle to Career (SC2C) aligns systems, partners, and community voices to support the success of every child in Stamford, from cradle to career. With more than 60 partner organizations and backbone support from United Way of Coastal and Western Connecticut, SC2C advances equitable outcomes through civic engagement, cross-sector collaboration, and data-informed action across the city.

FY2025 Highlights:

- Secured local funding for universal no-cost school meals for 8,333 students.
- Hosted 103 community events, engaging 4,043 residents through direct outreach and service.
- Expanded Full-Service Community Schools at Dolan and Rippowam, serving 80%+ of students, reducing in-school suspensions by 69%, and increasing positive family perception from 50% to 70%.
- Strengthened summer literacy outcomes for 459 children through 30+ hours of instruction, with 95% demonstrating measurable progress.
- Supported 890 graduating seniors with summer outreach; 87% of surveyed students reported they would not be attending college without that support.

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Lou and Heidi Winslow

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Michael Coelho
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Maura Keenan
Kristin Keil
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Iandra Lopes
Tia Murphy
Lisa O'Connor
Doug Ordonez
Beth Ellen Parkhurst
Spring Raymond
Charles Rodrigues
Theresa Santoro
Farley Santos
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Paul Steinmetz
Joanne Svogun
Susan Tomanio
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Tricia Gregory
Patty Gustello
Mark Panzera
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Vision Engineering (4)

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Heidi Namin
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Alexandra Ayavaca
Maria Arnao
Ximena Bravo
Celeste Gabriel
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Evelyn Merchan Guerrero
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Subhadra Pesantez
Ruth Pina
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Fanny Rodriguez
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Emylly Silva
Kimberly Veles
Valeska Zambrano

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Claudia Diaz
Blanca Gálvez
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Daniel DeJesus
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Dom Pereira
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Tanya Verissimo
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Chief Operating Officer

Edith Presley
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Bridgeport Prospers

Melissa Hannequin
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Danbury Collective

Yolande Ford
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Equity & Inclusion

Lauren Scopaz - Daunais
VP, Strategy & Operations,
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Liaison

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SC2C Director of Data
Evaluation & Learning

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SC2C Sr. Manager, Civic
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Sr. Manager of Community
& Civic Engagement

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Melissa Stern
Grant Writer

Tamika Cope
Parent Ambassador

Ingrid Gamboa
Toolkit Licensing
Coordinator

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Resource Development
Manager

Tajvic Tazwar
Communications Manager,
Collective Impact

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Community Schools
Manager - Rippowam

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Sr. Director Collective
Action Strategy, SC2C

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Finance Associate

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Coordinator

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Comm. Schools Mgr. -
Dolan

Meg Hadley
Food Security Coordinator

Elizabeth Quinonez
Sr. Director. of Early
Childhood

Maria del Pilar Vargas
Sr. Director Child Care
Initiatives

Daniel DeJesus
College & Career
Readiness Manager

Samantha Hayes
Events Manager

Gabriella Ramon
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Parent Ambassador

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Executive Assistant

Ebony Jeffress
Director Corporate
Engagement

Nina Salzman
Grant Writer

Roversy Ventura
Human Resources
Generalist

Faith Douglass
Resource Development
Director

Surline Joliceour
Sr. Marketing Manager

Victoria Scofield
Community Investments
Sr. Coordinator

Brittney Vosters
Director, Donor Relations

Lois Kugler
AgeWell Comm. Council
Coordinator

Milagrosa Seguinot
Project Manager

Archeline Youte
Community Engagement
Coordinator

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,467,983
Investments	\$5,401,080
Accounts receivable	\$970,442
Prepaid expenses and other assets	\$119,124
Furniture, fixtures and equipment	\$73,012
Right-of-use assets, operating leases	\$578,444
Assets restricted for long-term investments, endowments	\$150,746
Agency assets	\$180,534
TOTAL ASSETS	\$8,941,365

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Liabilities:

Accounts payable	\$803,640
Refundable advances on grants	\$74,472
Operating lease liabilities	\$617,528
Agency liabilities	\$180,534
Total liabilities	\$1,676,174
Total net assets	\$7,265,191
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$8,941,365

Condensed Combined Statement of Activities

PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Public Support:

Annual United Way Campaign results	\$2,810,920
Amounts designated by donors for specific organizations	\$(675,235)
Allowance for uncollectibles	\$(76,845)
Net Annual Campaign	\$2,058,840

Other Public Support:

Grants	\$1,947,236
Contributions received for special fundraising, sponsorships, and events	\$2,852,584
Total other public support	\$4,799,820

Other Revenue:

Interest and Investment Income	\$632,197
Fees and other income	\$52,030
Total Other Revenue	\$684,227
TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT AND OTHER REVENUE	\$7,542,887

DISTRIBUTIONS, ALLOCATIONS, AND EXPENSES

Program Services:

Program Services and Allocations to Agencies	\$4,412,547
Collective Action Initiatives	\$2,798,457
Total Program services	\$7,211,004

Support Services:

Resource development and marketing	\$604,418
Management and general	\$896,414
Total support Services	\$1,500,832
TOTAL DISTRIBUTIONS, ALLOCATIONS AND EXPENSES	\$8,711,836

Change in net assets	\$(1,168,949)
Net Assets, Beginning	\$8,434,140
Net Assets, Ending	\$7,265,191

United Way of Coastal and Western Connecticut is dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship of community resources. We welcome the opportunity to share information about how contributions are managed and invested. We invite you to review our **Charity Navigator Four-Star** rating, our **Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency**, and our complete audited financials at: www.unitedwaycwc.org/financials

Platinum
Transparency
2025

Candid.

Charity 
Navigator



✦ **FOUR-STAR** ✦

We remain steadfast in our commitment to addressing critical needs and creating opportunities for all. With your continued partnership, we will build on this year's successes, ensuring every individual and family has access to the resources they need to thrive.



**NORTHERN
FAIRFIELD COUNTY**

301 Main St. Suite 2-5
Danbury, CT 06810
(203) 792-5330

**SOUTHERN
LITCHFIELD COUNTY**

24 Bank St.
New Milford, CT 06776
(860) 354-8800

STAMFORD

1150 Summer St. 2nd FL
Stamford, CT 06901
(203) 348-7711

BRIDGEPORT

10 Middle St. Suite 1101
Bridgeport, CT 06604
(203) 334-5106