



Strategic Plan 2026-2029



Introduction

Since 1945, United Way of Southern Chester County has been a steadfast presence, investing in stronger, more connected communities thanks to the generosity of local companies, their employees and many donors. We work collaboratively with local businesses, leaders, and non-profits to understand the interconnected system-wide issues our neighbors are facing.

Moving forward, we have two newly organized and categorized impact areas to drive transformative changes: Healthy Community and Youth Opportunity. Informed by insights from our partners and community data trends, the 2026-2029 Strategic Plan of United Way of Southern Chester County reflects a commitment to deepen our impact and strengthen our community engagement.

We are strategically aligning our grantmaking, advocacy, and leadership, to address the most pressing issues our community faces such as housing affordability, food security, access to health services, affordable childcare, and transportation. This holistic approach allows us to tackle these challenges effectively.

Our three main areas of strategic focus over the next three years are:

- Establish measurable community impact strategies and collaborate with partners to create meaningful outcomes.
- Build our organizational strength.
- Build awareness of our impact in the community to grow participation and support with current and potential partners, donors, and volunteers.

Collectively, our strategy, impact areas, and goals will maximize collaboration and the full resources that United Way of Southern Chester County is known for.

A special thank you to those who participated in our process, from our business leaders, government officials, nonprofit leaders, donors, and board members. Our plan is informed by your expertise, as together, we can strengthen our communities so all can thrive.

Mission

To improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of our community through neighbors helping neighbors.

Vision

We strive for an engaged Southern Chester County rooted in compassion and collaboration where everyone in our community can thrive.

Impact Areas

In our role as a funder and connector, we are uniquely positioned to lead collective efforts to effect change for Southern Chester County. Based upon research from our listening sessions with key stakeholders, United For ALICE, Chester County 211 data, Chester County Regional Community Health Needs Assessment and United Way Worldwide, the planning committee identified the top priorities for Southern Chester County: **Healthy Community** and **Youth Opportunity**.



Healthy Community

Improving health and well-being for all.

- Affordable Housing (rental &utility assistance, shelters)
- Mental and physical health & wellness
- Food access
- Transportation
- Information & Referral



Youth Opportunity

Helping young people, ages 26 and under, realize their full potential.

- Early education and childcare
- After-school & summer learning
- College and career development

Establish measurable community impact strategies and collaborate with partners

Goal 1: Evaluate the Impact of United Way of Southern Chester County Services

We will align our expertise, programs, and grantmaking with research-driven community data to address the root causes of our most pressing community needs. Using the Enhanced Community Impact Model we will implement, sustain, and create lasting social changes in Southern Chester County.

The Enhanced Community Impact Model follows collective-impact strategies focused on building collaborative efforts to address priority community needs. Throughout the process, progress is tracked, measured, evaluated and reported.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Listen to and engage with community members and organizations- especially those experiencing the challenges we are addressing – to co-create solutions that address our communities' needs and build on its strengths.
- b. Use research, data, and feedback from our community to optimize resources and gain efficiencies

ENHANCED COMMUNITY IMPACT MODEL

1. Identify Community Needs

2. Engage & Mobilize Key Community Stakeholders

3. Implement Evidence-Based Programs

4. Fund Programs to Scale & Build Sustainability

5. Track, Measure, Evaluate and Report Community Change



Goal 2: Align our Grantmaking Process to an Impact Driven Grant Model

29% of households in Chester County struggle to make ends meet. For far too many neighbors, the cost of living outpaces what they earn. We are uniting for ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) to help make lasting change.

With input from the community, we will refine grantmaking and program practices, track progress, and measure impact for our ALICE households.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Align our grant application to demonstrate impact on the ALICE population in Southern Chester County, using an evaluation rubric used by our community impact volunteers. The rubric will measure the efficacy of the grantees' impact to make informed funding decisions.
- b. Open our grant process to partners addressing the key needs in our Healthy Community and Youth Opportunity impact areas. Partners with longstanding relationships with the United Way of Southern Chester County will need to illustrate their impact to the community annually, no partner is guaranteed funding, as the grant cycle is level set each year.
- c. Measure our investments to determine efficacy in our area.



Become a Volunteer for our Community Impact Program!

Visit unitedwayscc.org
For more info

Build our Organizational Strength

Goal 1: Optimize Board composition and committee representation to reflect the community we serve.

A diverse and representative Board ensures better decision-making, increased innovation, broader community connections, and more effective fundraising and resource development.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Conduct audit of existing skills, expertise, occupations, and demographics.
- b. Leverage Board diversity for insights into community priorities.
- c. Strengthen Board member identification, interviewing and onboarding process for clearly defined expectations.

Goal 2: Improve Board education and training.

Empowering our Board with tools for storytelling, advocacy, and fundraising will expand our capacity and impact.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Provide education opportunities to strengthen fundraising skills, to enable growth of donor base.
- b. Provide clear messaging and stories to enable the board to clearly articulate our mission to our donors and constituents.

“United Way sees the bigger picture about the health of our community—it’s about sharing what our community has.”

-Community Partner

Build awareness of our impact in the community to grow participation and support for current and potential partners, donors and volunteers

Goal 1: Deploy new branding statement across all communication channels to ensure clear, consistent messaging that resonates with donors, partners, and volunteers.

United Way of Southern Chester County will promote its unique value through an effective marketing strategy that builds upon its strong reputation across audiences and channels. Having a clear brand statement and visibility will assist us in growing our volunteer and donor network.

Our strategy will demonstrate the value of United Way of Southern Chester County in our

community, making sure that donors and volunteers understand our extensive work and meaningful change we create for our community.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Deploy new branding statement across all channels to showcase our resources, impact and story to audiences and organizations to grow our donor base
- b. Conduct quarterly review of marketing materials and communications to ensure consistent use of branding and clarity of messaging

United Way mobilizes our community into action, so all can thrive. Here in Southern Chester County, United Way means neighbors and local partners helping neighbors, building healthy communities and expanding youth opportunities so every household can flourish.

Strategic Planning Process

In the summer of 2025, United Way of Southern Chester County launched a collaborative strategic planning process. Working with consultant Kathy Wagner, United Way leadership co-created an approach designed to build on research data and many already-existing elements of a plan for the future, while taking into account the pressing needs facing our neighbors in Southern Chester County. We held various listening sessions to inform our plan and conducted research to inform our decision-making process. We held a half-day Board Retreat and identified the three areas of focus for our plan. Working groups then refined these ideas into an actionable framework designed to increase and showcase our impact, strengthen our organizational capacity, and enhance visibility for United Way of Southern Chester County. The Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Directors on December 3, 2025.

