



2025-2026



ANNUAL REPORT



UNITED WAY
Lincoln County

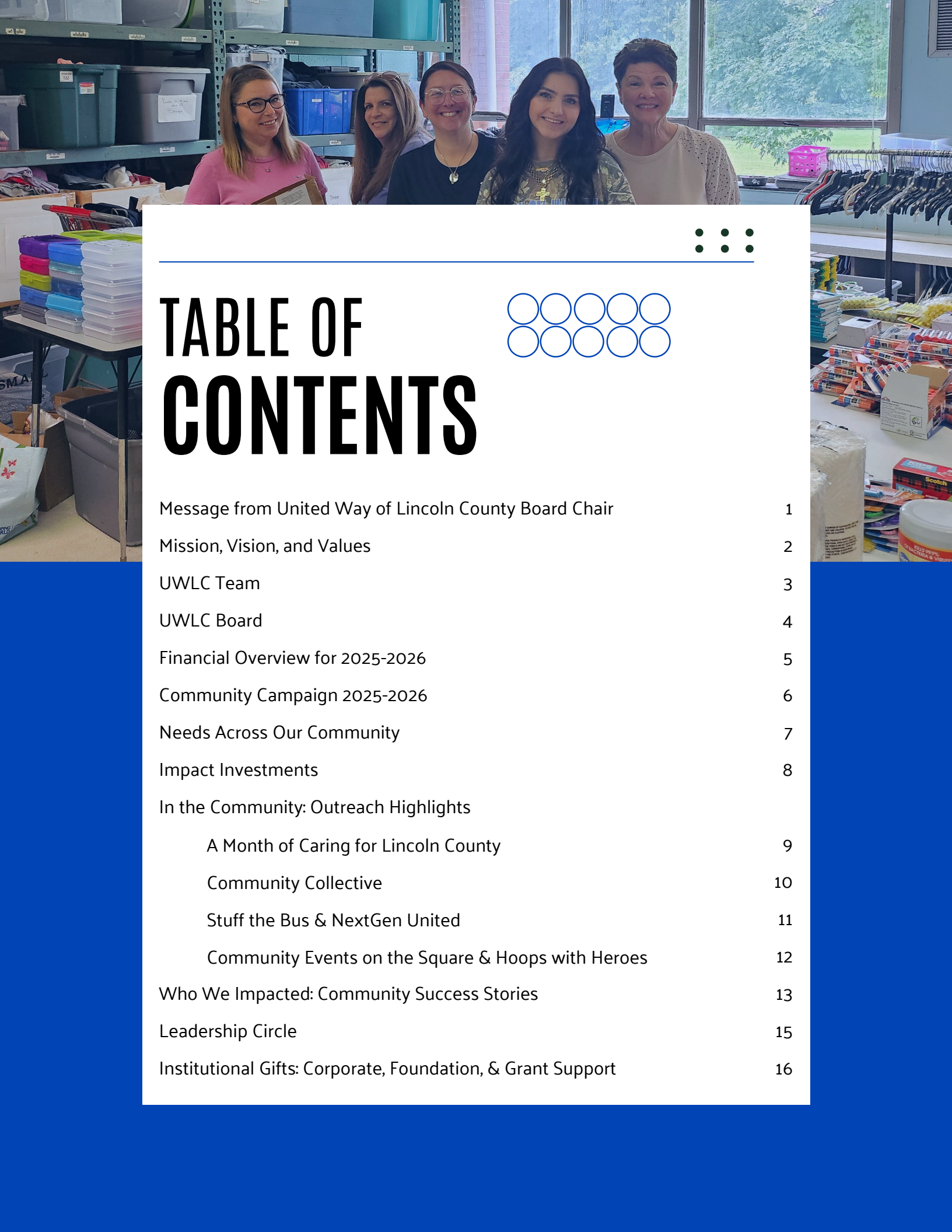
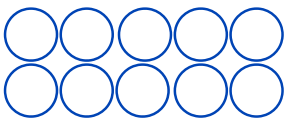


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MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR

Two years ago, when I accepted the role of Board Chair at this very annual meeting, I spoke about Lincoln County being the gold standard for collaboration. I believed it then, and after serving alongside so many dedicated volunteers, partners, and community leaders, I believe it even more today.

What makes United Way of Lincoln County special is not simply the programs we support or the dollars we raise. It is the willingness of people from different organizations, industries, and backgrounds to come together in service of something greater than themselves. Time and again, I have witnessed leaders setting aside

individual interests to focus on what is best for our community.

As I prepare to roll off as Chair, I find myself thinking less about what we have accomplished and more about what comes next. The future of our community depends on the next generation of leaders being invited into the work, experiencing the value of service, and understanding the impact they can have through collaboration. That begins with each of us.

My challenge to our nonprofit, business, government, and civic leaders is simple: take a fresh look at your board and volunteer leadership pipelines. Encourage emerging leaders within your organizations to serve. Create opportunities for them to contribute, learn, and lead. If we want Lincoln County to remain the gold standard in collaboration, we must intentionally steward those who will carry this work forward.

On behalf of the Board, thank you for your generosity, your partnership, and your commitment to this community. Together, we have built something remarkable. Together, we can ensure it continues to thrive for generations to come.



OUR MISSION

United Way of Lincoln County works to UNITE people and resources to improve the quality of life for all in Lincoln County.

OUR VISION

United Way of Lincoln County envisions a community that champions partnerships to enhance the well-being of all in Lincoln County.

OUR VALUES

United Way of Lincoln County ensures that everything we do embodies six core values: Collaboration, Stewardship, Integrity, Inclusivity, Compassion, and Being Solution-Oriented. Each of our actions seeks to bring together our community, make responsible and ethical decisions, bring together all different perspectives, understand the needs of Lincoln County, and look at both the short-term implications and long-term consequences to solve the problems at hand.



OUR STAFF

**Alisha Friday, Executive Director**

Born and raised in Lincoln County, Alisha Friday has more than 15 years of experience in nonprofit and community leadership. A graduate of Appalachian State University, she has served as Executive Director of United Way of Lincoln County since 2021, bringing people, resources, and ideas together to address community needs and create lasting impact. She is passionate about building stronger communities through collaboration and shared purpose. Her greatest calling starts at home, and she sees her community work as an overflow of the love and blessings she finds in her husband and daughter.

Tammy Dotson, Finance Administrator

Tammy Dotson has supported United Way of Lincoln County's finances since 2012, bringing decades of experience in financial management, grants, advising, and nonprofit operations. In addition to her role with United Way, she serves as Assistant Director for Ashure Ministry, providing program and financial oversight. We are fortunate to benefit from Tammy's expertise, kindness, and attention to detail. Outside of work, she loves her sweet cats and spending time with her grandniece and grandnephew.

**Faith Barnes-Martin, Community Engagement & Operations Coordinator**

As a Lincolnton native, Faith Barnes-Martin started working for United Way of Lincoln County in 2024, but that wasn't the beginning of her relationship with the organization. When she was in high school, she served as United Way of Lincoln County's Teen Board president. Since then, Faith has worked in several fields relating to community impact. At UWLC, she focuses on acting as a community resource connector, planning events, growing community programs, and managing operations.

OUR BOARD

Michelle Barnhart
Andrew Beard
Julie Byrne
Kelly Calderon
Matthew Foster
Casey Gilbert
Robin Goodson

Jennifer Green
Lauren Heavner
Chrystal Hoyle
Kelley Miles
Jenifer Raimsey
Charlie Reep
HD Reid

Noah Rhyne
Durant Scholz
Aaron Swain
Tri Tang

OUR COMMITTEE LEADERS

Executive Committee Michelle Barnhart (Chair),

Lauren Heavner (Vice Chair), Julie Byrne (Treasurer)

Governance & Nominating Committee Chair Aaron Swain

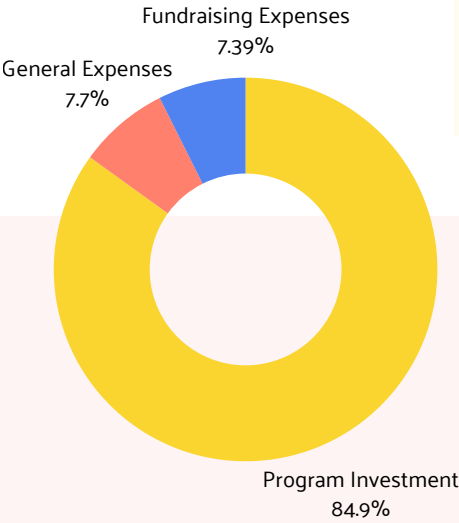
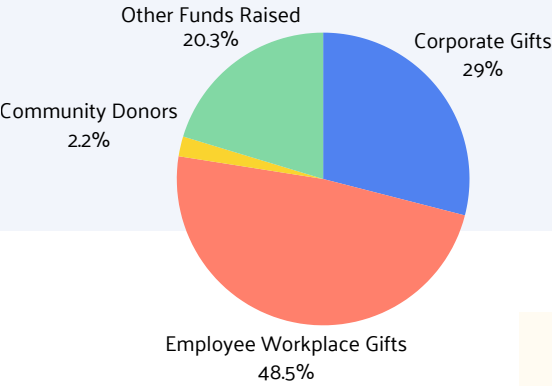
Finance Committee Chair Julie Byrne

Allocations Committee Chairs Chrystal Hoyle & Robin Goodson

Campaign Committee Chair Michelle Barnhart

Events & Volunteerism Committee Chairs Jennifer Raimsey & Casey Gilbert

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

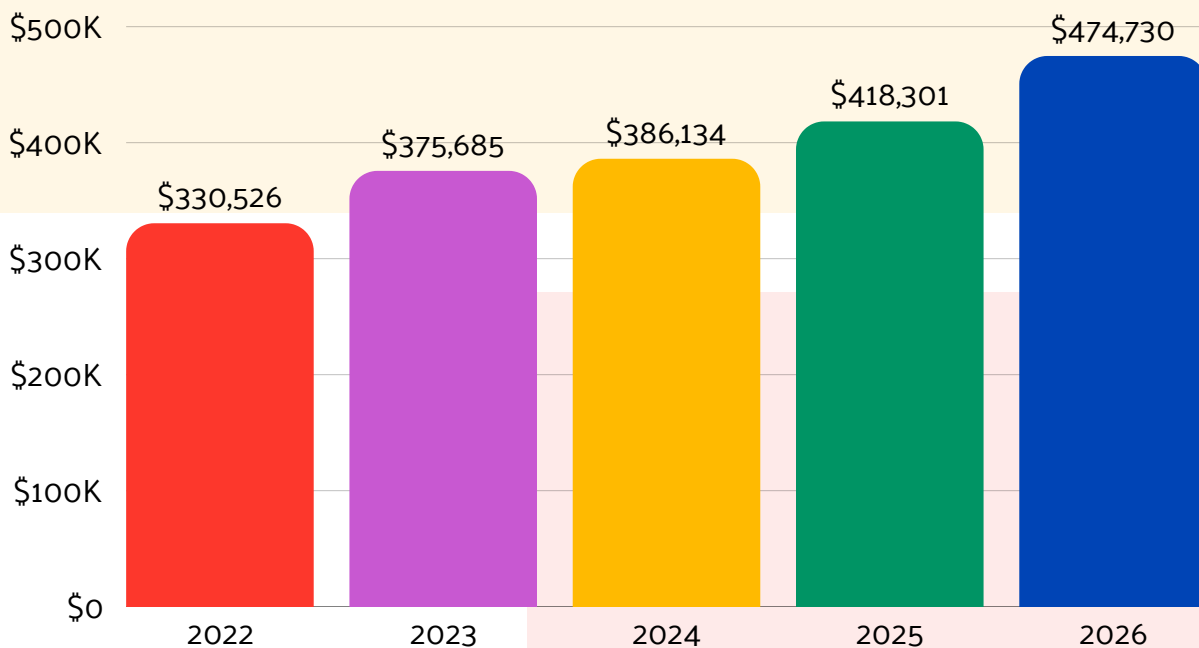


ASSETS	
Cash	\$293,255
Pledges receivable	216,158
Other current assets	4,606
Total current assets	514,019
Other assets	400
Total assets	\$514,419
LIABILITIES	
Accounts payable	5,042
Other current liabilities	22,299
Total liabilities	27,341
NET ASSETS	
Unrestricted net assets	103,221
Temporarily restricted net assets	245,068
Board Restricted	138,789
Total net assets	487,078
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$514,419

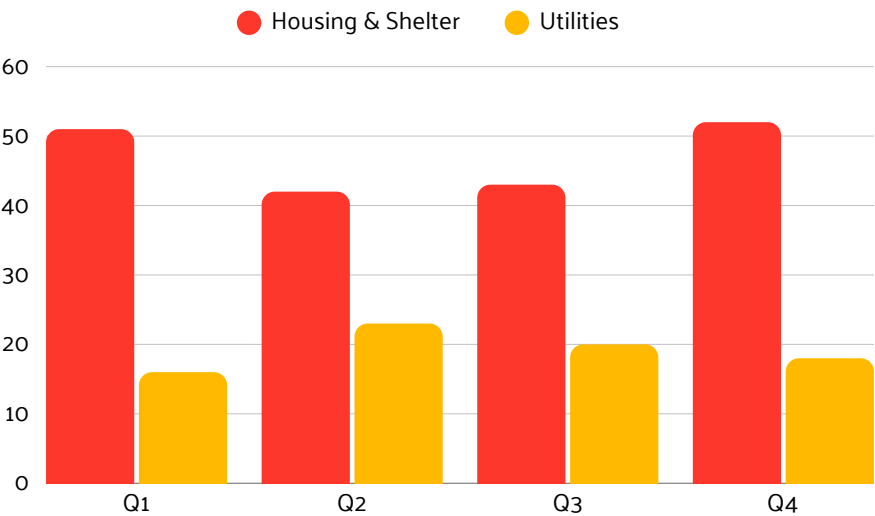
COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN

Each year, our community raises the bar, and this year was no different. Raising a staggering \$474,730 for United Way of Lincoln County, our community, including corporations, foundations, local businesses, individuals, and grants, has increased our campaign by 13% compared to last year! The campaign is made up of revenue from employee workplace gifts, corporate gifts, community donors, and other funds raised.

Our campaign allowed United Way of Lincoln County to take on new funded partners, increase community grant amounts, grow our community support, and build out more outreach programs! In fact, program investments made up 84.94% of expenditures, while general expenses and fundraising expenses were only 7.67% and 7.39 % respectively. All money raised impacts Lincoln County residents by providing support and services for critical needs, and we are so grateful for our community's support that encourages us to embody neighbors helping neighbors!



NEEDS ACROSS OUR COMMUNITY

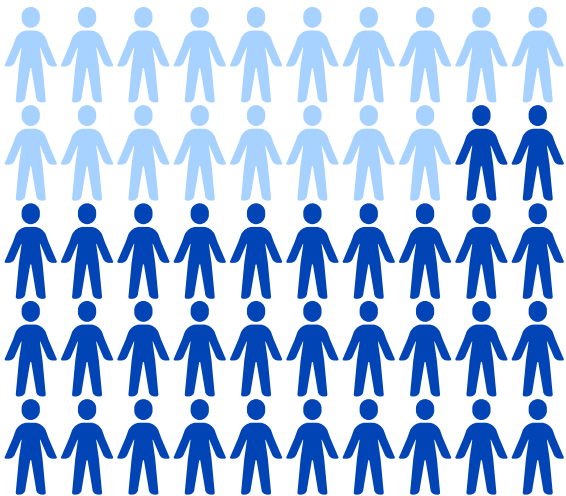


From October 2025 through September 2026, over 1,300 Lincoln County individuals called into 211 for assistance. This is in addition to almost 700 calls into our office. Each of these callers are our neighbors, and they are reaching out for help.

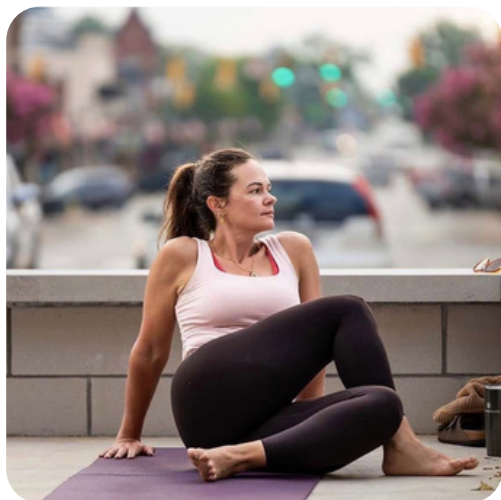
According to the data from these calls, there are two major areas of need for Lincoln County residents: housing/shelter and utilities. These comprise the top two problems our community faced throughout the last 12 months. Housing/shelter made up 51%, 42%, 43%, and 52% of calls to 211 in Q1 (Oct. 2025-Dec. 2025), Q2 (Jan. 2026-March 2026), Q3 (April 2026-June 2026), and Q4 (July 2026-Sep. 2026) respectively. Similarly, utility assistance made up 16%, 23%, 20%, and 18% of calls. These are basic needs: a safe place to sleep, water, and power—essentials to most people.

Nearly 40% of all households in Lincoln County are considered either below the poverty line or struggling to make ends meet.

These families are our neighbors. They're our friends, coworkers, mentors, and family. Many of the calls into our office were from ALICE families, also known as Asset-Limited Income-Constrained Employed households, who had fallen on hard times. Something as simple as an injury or car trouble can force a family who was scraping by to face the threat of eviction or their power being cut off. ALICE households can typically make it through the month as long as everything goes right, but as life often changes those plans, they must come up with alternative plans and United Way of Lincoln County is there to help.



IMPACT INVESTMENTS



Health & Wellness

- 2,148 individuals received affordable medication & health service assistance
- 612 families impacted by disabilities & special needs benefited from programs that provide job readiness, independent living skills, and more
- 275 community members got active through the Summer Sun & Racing Fun 5K and weekly Wellness on the Square Run Club meetings and Yoga Classes
- 108 lives impacted through aging adult caregiving services

Financial Stability

- 763 vulnerable neighbors provided shelter and wrap-around resources
- 2,310 basic needs met through the West & Asbury Resource Centers
- 145 lives empowered through housing stability assistance, financial literacy, & life skills support
- \$48,626.37 provided for emergency assistance and financial literacy programs



Youth Opportunity

- 5,060 lives impacted through awareness, prevention, intervention, & education services focused on addressing and preventing child abuse
- 1,473 lives impacted by behavioral intervention programming & mentoring for at-risk youth
- 710 students, teachers, and families supported through back-to-school supplies, literacy events, tutoring, & summer arts enrichment
- 1,873 lives impacted through affordable, enriching childcare supports across our community

IN THE COMMUNITY: OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

A MONTH OF CARING FOR LINCOLN COUNTY

To celebrate 65 years in our community, United Way of Lincoln County hosted a full Month of Caring rather than just one day! With more than 15 projects, volunteers made their impact across the whole county. From helping Lincoln County YMCA prepare for summer camp and handing out Journey of Hope's blessing bags to individuals experiencing homelessness and much more, our volunteers got to know more than a dozen different organizations, each with their own passion for helping our community. Throughout the month of April, volunteers chose which projects they were drawn to and exemplified what neighbors helping neighbors really means!

Month of Caring also debuted the new county-wide volunteer hub, Get Connected! This platform is available to all organizations who need volunteers, and we project that it will be the central space in our community for any and all volunteer needs. Since Month of Caring, we had over 160 new registrations with over 200 hours volunteered! We are so excited to see how this platform will grow and impact our community.

To finish out Month of Caring, United Way of Lincoln County hosted a Party Bus Tour for local leaders and community members, where we were able to tour and learn about all 13 of our funded partners! This experience brought together industry, government, and education leaders to better serve Lincoln County.



United Way of Lincoln County hosted our first ever Lincoln County Community Collective, bringing together health, education, business, faith, nonprofit, and government leaders to discuss building a stronger, more connected ecosystem of care. Nearly 100 leaders from all over our community came together to learn about the Community Collective, available resources, and what local leaders are seeing in Lincoln County. Atrium Health's Jeff Ross, Gaston College's Joanne Matz, Lincoln County School's Aaron Allen, Timken's Michelle Barnhart, Lake Forest Church-West Lake's Aron Gibson, NC House's Heather Rhyne, and Lincoln County Department of Social Services' Matthew Hillman shared information about their individual sectors and the impact a collective model has on our community.

In addition, we presented several resources that are available to our community, including Unite Us, a case management platform, 211, a 24/7 free helpline for anyone in Lincoln County, and Get Connected, the new volunteer platform that will become the volunteer hub for all of Lincoln County. Each of these resources focus on unity and collaboration, helping to share information and keep our community streamlined and on the same page.

We also began an important conversation about aligning community-wide meetings and committees to ensure that all of our efforts are adding up to more rather than fighting against each other. This will allow for the great work being done across our county to reach shared goals and the most impact in Lincoln County.

This meeting is only the start of the Community Collective, and we can't wait to see where it goes from here!





STUFF THE BUS

This year's annual Stuff the Bus initiative brought in more supplies than ever before, ensuring that more than 400 children and over 75 teachers started the school year prepared and ready for success! Over 30 local businesses acted as donation sites and soared past the donation amount from last year. Atrium Health had more than 720 pounds of donations, and the Timken Company's donations grew by more than 150% compared to last year! This year's success allowed hundreds of kids to benefit from our community's back-to-school efforts. At West Fest, the back-to-school event for the western side of the county, over 280 students were able to get school supplies and over 140 received clothes to help get them through the school year. School supplies were also given out at several other back-to-school events across the county, like Love Lincolnton and Love Denver. Stuff the Bus is one of our favorite programs, and 2026 blew our hopes and goals out of the water!

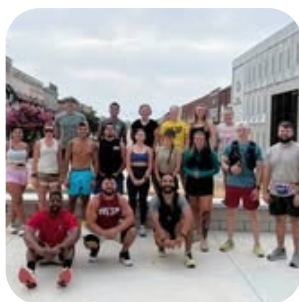


NEXTGEN UNITED

Last year saw the inaugural year of our teen program, NextGen United! Made up of 12 high schoolers from across Lincoln County, NextGen focuses on social responsibility and civic engagement. Throughout the year, they met local leaders in different industries, including health, education, government, and more. They learned directly from our top leaders, getting the inside scoop about what Lincoln County faces and how they can make an impact themselves. Throughout the year, they hosted a food drive, supported our Holiday Helpers events during December, and planned a 5K fundraiser to support United Way's Community Fund. During the 5K, Summer Sun & Racing Fun 5K, they exceeded their goal and had 100 runners and raised just over \$1000. In everything they did, our NextGen group worked together to better our community and engaged with each topic with their whole hearts and minds. United Way of Lincoln County is incredibly proud of these teens, and we're excited to see where our second year will take us!

COMMUNITY EVENTS ON THE SQUARE

United Way of Lincoln County collaborated with Lincoln County to put on several events on the Historic Courthouse Lawn & Green in downtown Lincolnton throughout the summer and fall of 2026. Along with Lincoln County Family YMCA, the Small Town Run Club, and the County, we developed Community Wellness on the Square! This event series offers yoga classes as well as a running club, and community members have responded with incredible enthusiasm. As one of our main focuses revolves around health and wellness, this event series has really highlighted Lincoln County's connection to healthy living. For national literacy month, United Way partnered with Lincoln County to put on Reading on the Square, a reading-focused event that brought together seven businesses and organizations in Lincoln County and encouraged our community to build their literacy skills! With booths from Fred & June's Bookstore, Milk & Honey Mercantile, Bound Bookstore, the Partnership for Children, Encompass Learning, and Friends of the Library, attendees had the chance to shop for all things books, as well as do fun reading crafts and attend story time! These events have been a fun way to engage our community, and we're excited to see it grow!



HOOPS WITH HOMETOWN HEROES

This year, United Way of Lincoln County partnered with the City of Lincolnton for our first ever Hoops with Hometown Heroes Basketball Tournament! The Lincolnton Police Department, East Lincoln Fire Department, and the Lincolnton Fire Department competed for first prize, showcasing their commitment to our community and their incredible hoop skills! This event brought together our community and raised money for the United Way of Lincoln County Community Fund, ensuring that low-income neighborhoods have tutors, families in crisis receive emergency funding, and so much more. While the first annual Hoops with Hometown Heroes came to an exciting end, we can't wait to see what next year brings!



WHO WE IMPACTED: COMMUNITY SUCCESS STORIES

Ali's Story

Ali and her husband have normal lives—raise their three kids, go to work, take care of an ailing parent. When Ali's job switched from full-time to part-time, their savings dwindled quickly. Despite finding a full-time position within a few months, those weeks of rockiness meant that they were faced with an insurmountable bill and the risk of losing power. After she reached out, United Way of Lincoln County's emergency fund was able to offer her financial support, and now Ali and her family can continue their thriving lives!



Jack's Story

Jack has spent the last several years struggling. After the loss of a close family member, he lost his housing and his job. Thanks to a collaboration across the community, Jack was able to get his license renewed, attend job interviews, obtain employment, move into a new apartment, receive furniture, and secure transportation! Thanks to the work of Lincoln County DSS, City of Lincoln, Lincoln Police Department, Furnish a Furniture, Christian Ministry, United Way of Lincoln County, and an anonymous donor, Jack is on the path to success and stability. While homelessness is a widespread issue that affects dozens of people in Lincoln County, each victory is worth celebrating!



Lydia's Story

Lydia is a senior citizen who has been managing her life well enough for decades. Unfortunately, she fell victim to a scam. Her bank account was wiped out, but her rent was still coming due. Despite her hard work and normal independence, Lydia found herself having to ask for help for the first time. Thankfully, United Way of Lincoln County was able to connect Lydia with LC Senior Services fraud prevention classes, and along with East Lincoln Christian Ministries and multiple churches, United Way of Lincoln County was able to ensure that Lydia avoided eviction and stayed in her home.



Carson's Story

Carson has never had to ask for help before, but when he went through medical emergency after medical emergency, his family's ability to make ends meet became too strained. Now that they're adjusting to him no longer being able to work, plus having two kids in school, Carson knew to reach out for help. Thankfully, United Way of Lincoln County was able to use the emergency fund to help support his rent and keep Carson's family in their home, as well as share other resources that they can use while they get back on their feet!



LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

Every year, dozens of individuals and families donate to our mission, ensuring that the impact United Way of Lincoln County makes in our community continues to grow. These donors are leading the charge to overcome Lincoln County's largest struggles and hardest obstacles, and they embody what it means to be neighbors helping neighbors.

DeTouqueville (\$10,000+)

Regis T. Repko

Steven Capps

Platinum (\$5,000-\$9,999)

Jonathan Waller

Richard Haynes

Gold (\$2,000-\$4,999)

Aaron Durant Allen

Scott J. Moroney

William Deane

Elizabeth A. Schroeder

Silver (\$1,000-\$3,999)

Michelle Barnhart

Lance & Alisha Friday

Michelle Reed

Brad Bertle

C. Gibson

Charles Reep

Paul Bonsignore

Ken Kendrick Guerrin

Jeffrey T. Ross

Iva J. Branton

Dale Anthony Harris

Erin Rydell

Julie Byrne

Dana Harrison

Charlie Edward Sigmon

Robert Caccia

Rita A. Heath

Michael A. Stolzenbach

Linda Chinery

Michel Mesa

Tri B. Tang

Matt Corona

Bryan Lee Newton

Jennifer J. Terry

Stacy C. Cox

Robin R. Oates

Dr. Jim & Teresa Watson

Kindra J. Daves

Bradley Parliament

Veronica Williams

Shiryl A. Fournier

Jennifer Raimey

Bronze (\$750-\$999)

Michael R. Clemmer

Mark A. Howell

Barbara McDaniel

Bobby Jo Cook

Tia Howell

Michael (Gage) Pegram

Andrew Fellows

Angela Kennedy

Jolie Shifflet

Debora Harkey

Joshua Lee

Emmala R. Waduge

Austin Houser

Sharon McDaniel

INSTITUTIONAL GIFTS: CORPORATE, FOUNDATION, & GRANT SUPPORT

The support from our Corporate Partners secures United Way of Lincoln County's mission and vision. It is because of these partners that we are able to provide community grants, outreach, and direct support to Lincoln County. Through sponsorships, direct donations, and other ventures, our Corporate Partners allow us to unite our neighbors with the resources they need to lead thriving, successful lives.

Platinum (\$50,000+)

Timken Corporation

Silver (\$5,000-\$19,999)

Atrium Health

Boyd-Glenn Foundation

Duke Energy

Fifth Third Bank

Partners Behavioral Health Management

Publix

United Way of North Carolina

Bronze (\$1,000-\$4,999)

Lincoln Cultural Center

Quik Trip Corporation

Ross Bulla and Shad Spencer

Philanthropic Fund

Robert Bosch Tool

St. James United Methodist Church Inc

United Bank

Aiden's Light Memorial Fund LLC

Concrete Supply

Denver Lake Norman Rotary Club Foundation Inc

Denver United Methodist Church

First Federal Savings Bank

Foundations for the Carolinas

Kohler

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SIGNATURE



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