



Berkshire United Way



**INCREASING EQUITY TO BUILD A
THRIVING COMMUNITY.**

2023–2026 Strategic Plan SUMMARY



Berkshire United Way traces its roots to efforts that began in 1924 to support and serve the residents of Berkshire County.

As the organization approaches its centennial, our vision is that Berkshire County remains a dynamic, engaged community with opportunities for everyone to thrive. We work alongside and in partnership with individuals, businesses, and community organizations to ignite collective power and build a stronger community.

In 2022, we conducted a robust community assessment and a strategic planning process. This plan acknowledges the economic, educational, social, and public health disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Berkshires, recognizes growing structural inequalities and changing community demographics, and looks ahead to the organization's next 100 years of community leadership.

Included throughout this plan are actions that intentionally and authentically build our diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) capacity. Our commitment that "everyone matters in Berkshire County" begins first with the staff and board, how they listen and learn, how the community is engaged, how they hire, recruit, and develop, and how the organization operates every day.

Many Berkshire residents continue to struggle to meet their family's basic needs — primarily housing and food — due to cost of living and income inequality.



Looking ahead, data shows that community resources will continue to be strained, emphasizing the need for increased capacity, innovation, and dollars.

GOALS

Our strategic planning process identified three high-impact goals that will focus Berkshire United Way's ongoing efforts:

GOAL 1

Deepen collaboration, advocacy, and investment with partners who empower individuals and families to thrive.

The core of our community impact efforts involves engaging others to increase opportunities for individuals and families in Berkshire County to achieve safety and security, and to have the ability to reach their own goals. Collaboration and inclusion are key to achieving this vision for the community, but it also requires working on shoring up the systems that provide support across the community. Consequently, our strategies prioritize advocacy, incorporating community voices, data-informed public policy, and uncovering and addressing barriers to equitable prosperity.

Strategies

- Review and reframe Berkshire United Way's funding priorities.
- Promote equity by streamlining the grant application and reporting processes.
- Encourage collaboration by convening community partners.
- Seed and pilot collaborative initiatives with a thorough evaluative component to assess success.
- Work with community partners to articulate a shared legislative agenda.

GOAL 2

Increase our capacity and resources to equitably support Berkshire County and expand community engagement with our mission and vision.

As we move into a second century of investing in Berkshire County, we recognize the local economy has changed. This change includes new businesses, new residents living here and working remotely, and second homeowners and seasonal visitors, among others. This creates an opportunity and responsibility to advance and increase our core fundraising activities to improve and innovate beyond what has worked in the past. Strategies within this goal focus on growing, sustaining, and diversifying funding, inspiring and increasing engagement, and strengthening relationships.

Strategies

- Develop and implement a comprehensive fundraising plan to diversify giving and increase revenue.
- Increase community awareness and engagement through communications and events.
- Increase volunteer engagement and satisfaction.

GOAL 3

Strengthen our foundation to ensure we have the capacity and resources to serve the community, now and in the future.

Berkshire United Way has a critical role to play in the future of the Berkshires. This responsibility reflects a legacy of trust, born out of a history of community stewardship, financial management, as well as sound processes and administration. Looking ahead, we will need to evolve and strengthen to offer more, as the community needs more. Being a sustainable organization in the future will mean maintaining a commitment to excellence, while increasing internal capacity and resources for additional competencies, capacities, and functions.

Strategies

- Strengthen BUW's organizational foundation.
- Model DEIB values internally and externally.
- Increase team and board engagement, empowerment, and satisfaction.
- Enhance collaborations to expand scope and effectiveness of BUW's programs.



JOIN US TODAY!

Donate

Make an investment in Berkshire United Way now and help us build a more equitable future as we enter our next century of impact.



berkshireunitedway.org/donate

Volunteer

The Berkshire United Way online Volunteer Center connects organizations that need assistance with interested volunteers looking to share their time and talent.



volunteerberkshireuw.org



CREATING COMMUNITY-BASED SOLUTIONS

This is a pivotal moment for Berkshire County.

Understanding conditions, needs, and opportunities provides a lens for us to look back on how Berkshire County has changed, look closer at what has fueled Berkshire United Way's positive impact, and look ahead to how we will collaborate and lead to build a brighter future for everyone. This strategic planning process and the resulting plan will position Berkshire United Way for its next century of service.

There is a need and a desire to strengthen systems of support in the community by enhancing social service infrastructure, increasing access to information, and fostering intentional and inclusive collaboration.

Acknowledgments

Berkshire United Way acknowledges and thanks everyone in the community who contributed to the development of this plan. The planning team included BUW staff and Board members, guided and mentored by Alison LaRocca and Shannon Stagner of Civitas Strategies and Luminary Evaluation Group.

#HereForGood



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2022-2023

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