

MOVING PEOPLE from Poverty to Possibility

Why Focus on
Reducing Poverty?



40%

of households in St. Joseph County are struggling to meet basic needs—many could be your family, friends and neighbors.

Early Learning

Ages 0-12



Goal

Ensure that children are surpassing key readiness and early grade reading benchmarks.

Youth Success

Ages 13-18



Goal

Ensure that children are graduating from high school with the skills necessary to pursue post-secondary education or advanced training.

Stable Families

Ages 18+



Goal

Ensure adults achieve long-term financial stability by developing the skills and opportunities to obtain and sustain employment.

Support Services

A network of services to help individuals/families move past immediate need to fully participate in United Way of St. Joseph County's Community Impact priorities.

Local Implementation

- ▶ **Program Solutions**
Support measurable, direct services for individuals and families
- ▶ **Impact Initiatives**
Increase efficiency and effectiveness by aligning suitable programs and services
- ▶ **Collective Impact**
Improve underlying community conditions through broad-based, multi-sector efforts

LIVE UNITED



United Way of St. Joseph County

To mobilize the community to collectively reduce poverty.

UWSJC.ORG

MOVING PEOPLE

from Poverty to Possibility

Early Learning

Ages 0-12



Community Issue:

Children from low-income families are less likely to have access to high-quality early education, and are less likely to enter school prepared for success.

Reading proficiency by third grade is the most important predictor of high school graduation and career success. Yet every year, more than 80% of low-income children miss this crucial milestone.

United Way's Community Impact Goal:

Ensure that children are surpassing key development and early grade achievement benchmarks by supporting programs that serve young children (and their families) and prepare them to succeed in school.

Community Strategies:

- Ensure children ages 0–5 receive quality early learning opportunities.
- Increase knowledge/skills of parenting and early childhood development.
- Support strong transition programming into kindergarten.
- Invest in results-focused programming for students and their families in kindergarten–third grade.

Youth Success

Ages 13-18



Community Issue:

Students who do not read proficiently by 4th grade are four times more likely to drop out of school than those reading at or above grade level.

More students drop out in 9th grade than any other grade. High school dropouts can expect to earn about \$500,000 less over the course of their lifetime than high school graduates and are 3.5 times more likely to be incarcerated.

United Way's Community Impact Goal:

Invest in programs that ensure that children are graduating from high school with the skills necessary to pursue post-secondary education or advanced training.

Community Strategies:

- Engage students in positive youth development activities.
- Improve middle school and high school transition programming.
- Provide targeted academic interventions for struggling students.
- Provide access to support services, including behavioral health services, for children and their families.

Stable Families

Ages 18+



Community Issue:

Across St. Joseph County, 40% of households struggle to afford the basic necessities of housing, child care, food, health care, and transportation.

Many of these families—"the working poor"—have one or more members working full-time but are mired in low-wage jobs that provide inadequate benefits and offer little opportunity for advancement and economic security.

United Way's Community Impact Goal:

Ensure adults achieve long-term financial stability by supporting programs that help them develop the skills to meet their basic needs, obtain and sustain employment and improve their quality of life.

Community Strategies:

- Increase workforce readiness.
- Increase financial literacy.
- Increase access to primary and behavioral healthcare.
- Provide opportunities to increase educational levels.
- Improve transportation options for low-income families and individuals.