



United Way of Pierce County

# tackling poverty at its **roots**

*Because one in three  
families is too many*



*Annual  
Report  
2023*

# Dear United Way of Pierce County Community,

As we look back on the significant strides made in 2023, we are reminded of the tangible impact that collective efforts can have on our community. It is with immense pride and gratitude that we share the journey we've embarked on together, guided by the simple yet powerful philosophy shared by Desmond Tutu: "Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."

United Way remains steadfast in its commitment to serving the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) families of Pierce County, those hardworking individuals who strive against economic constraints. In the face of adversity, we continue to unite with our community partners to combat poverty, one family at a time.

Our mission is clear—we mobilize and unite the caring power of Pierce County to tackle our community's toughest challenges to improve lives in measurable and lasting ways, advocating fiercely for the well-being of ALICE households. Through our Basic Needs programs, we've provided essential support to over 130,000 individuals, offering a lifeline in times of crisis and

uncertainty. Our 211 Help service has connected tens of thousands with vital resources, ensuring no one faces hardship alone.

In 2023, the Center for Strong Families continues to be a beacon of hope, empowering families with tools for resilience and self-sufficiency. Our network of coaches facilitated remarkable outcomes, from significant income increases to job placements, all contributing to the economic empowerment of our community.

Looking ahead, we're launching initiatives like "Elevate Women" to address the pay gap, advancing family-centered coaching, and expanding financial literacy programs.

Our commitment to ALICE families remains unwavering as we seek innovative ways to uplift and support them. Our challenges are daunting, but our resolve is stronger than ever. Together, let us continue to turn moments into movements, transforming lives and advocating for a more equitable Pierce County.

With deep gratitude for your unwavering support,



**Dona Ponepinto**  
President and CEO



**Sebrena Chambers**  
Board President



United Way of Pierce County

***United, we will lift 15,000 households out of poverty by 2028 and into self-sufficiency, one family at a time. To date, through your investments and our community partners, 9,875 families are moving towards self-sufficiency and on their way to building wealth.***





United Way of Pierce County

# Thank You United Way of Pierce County Board of Directors



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# Highlights

During MLK Month of Service, 74 volunteers from 14 companies united to craft 2,000 hygiene kits for the Homeless Point in Time Count, embodying the spirit of community and compassion.

We celebrated our Centennial Gala at the Silver Cloud at Point Ruston on May 6, marking a memorable milestone in our organization's history. The evening was truly unforgettable, highlighted by the incredible generosity of our community. Together, we raised an astounding \$540,000, a testament to the enduring support that fuels our mission.

During Summer of Action, 121 volunteers, supported by 13 sponsors, assembled and distributed 1,500 snack packs to 474 children, along with 640 new books and 100 backpacks. Additionally, 27 companies donated over 6,000 lbs of food, providing 4,800 meals for neighbors in need through our "Everything but the Turkey" food drive.

We celebrated Premier Partners and Campaign Award Nominees and Winners on a beautiful evening at Cheney Stadium on July 14, 2023.

Our 7th Annual Summit, "From Poverty to Possibilities," held on November 14, 2023, was a transformative event. It united community leaders and members to tackle economic equity barriers through open dialogue and systemic change. Keynote speaker, Edgar Villanueva spoke to the over 300 people in attendance.





# Have you met *Alice*?

**ALICE**® is a United Way acronym for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained and **E**mployed. **ALICE** families often find innovative ways to get by and navigate issues such as food insecurity, difficulty paying bills, reducing debt and maintaining health care. Living paycheck to paycheck can take a toll on mental health and wellness. Dismantling poverty is not only about programs and services. Understanding and working to shift systems that create wealth disparities ensures our success.

107,000

Families in Pierce County, many who are hardworking families with children, struggle to make ends meet.

1 in 3

Community members live below the ALICE threshold, earning less than needed to maintain economic stability.

57%

More than half of ALICE families do not have enough saved to cover 3 months of living expenses in the case of an emergency or loss of employment.



Scan the QR code to view United Way of the Pacific Northwest's 2023 ALICE report for Washington and Pierce County to learn more about the racial wealth gap and trends among ALICE in our community.



# Basic Needs

Basic Needs is an essential component of the social safety net. As a result of UWPC investments, **130,177** individuals had access to food, shelter and other essentials to help households move from crisis to stability.



1,604

Individuals received supports to break down barriers to self-sufficiency

1,122

Individuals were served through shelter and housing programs

497

Individuals received behavioral health support

7,132

Individuals received culturally appropriate food, social-emotional supports for students, parenting supports and more.

## *Nourishing Hope* Tina's Journey with United Way

*Tina was a devoted mother excited about her new job, but COVID-19 struck. Quarantined at home with little food, and unpaid leave threatening her job security, Tina felt hopeless. But the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department connected her with the Emergency Food Network (EFN)'s food delivery program, bringing her solace. Tina returned to work with renewed strength. Through its partnership with EFN, United Way provided not just sustenance, but hope. Food became the cornerstone of Tina's journey back to self-sufficiency, a testament to the transformative power of community care. Tina's story shines as a beacon of resilience, woven together by the unwavering support of United Way and its allies as they turn challenges into opportunities.*



# 211 Help When You Need It Most



74,198

Total Number of Contacts

6,441

Connected to Shelter

7,613

Connected to Rental Assistance

2,097

Connected to Ride United Rides

3,345

Connected to Transportation

24

Connected to Permanent Housing

## Highlights

- South Sound 211 expanded the Health Provider Referral pilot to 2 new pediatric healthcare locations. This provides staff and providers with a direct referral connection to 211 Navigators to support families with basic needs and parenting resources identified during medical visits.
- 211 connected 815 individuals to tax assistance, managing scheduling for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites.
- Washington State Department of Transportation recognized 211's Transportation Resource Center with \$654,580 in funding to continue the program for four more years.

“

*United Way and 211 has been a lifesaver for my family, but their navigator was an angel. She went above and beyond to find the resources and help I needed, not just once but twice. As a domestic violence survivor, I left with nothing, not even hope. With two little ones to support on my own, I felt defeated and lost. But thanks to United Way and 211, my children and I found a home and a better situation.*

*They gave us a head start toward the life we want to live. We will be forever grateful for this life-saving organization and everyone involved.*

”



United Way of Pierce County



# Center for Strong Families

In 2023, our Center for Strong Families (CSF) network highlighted the resilience of Pierce County families. Our 22 coaches provided tools and resources to enhance resilience, connecting families to living-wage careers, solid financial plans, and strategies to reduce debt and build assets. Our seven CSFs, created through unique collaborations among Pierce County agencies, are dedicated to improving financial stability for community members.

\$6,279

Average Increase in Short Term Savings

\$21.54

Average Hourly Wage

4,538

Total Number of CSF Clients Served Since 2016

\$1,936

Average Monthly New Income Increase

95

Individuals Who Achieved Financial Goal

741

Connected with Coaches

64

Career Advancing Credentials Obtained

105

Individuals Placed in Jobs

## Seven Locations

- Bethel School District
- Clover Park Technical College
- Goodwill of the Olympics and Rainier Region
- Sound Outreach
- Sumner-Bonney Lake Family Resource Center
- Tacoma Community House
- Tacoma Housing Authority

130

Individuals Who Saw a Net Worth Increase

- **Innovative Workforce Development:** Initiatives introduced cutting-edge training methodologies, including utilizing ChatGPT prompts for crafting resumes and cover letters.
- **Expanding Access in East Pierce County:** CSF significantly broadened its service footprint—it now includes Sumner-Bonney Lake Family Support Center, furthering our commitment to serving diverse communities.
- **Enhancing Communication:** CSF distributed personal translation devices to 20 coaches. This enables seamless communication with clients in 39 languages, ensuring that language barriers do not hinder access to vital services and support.

These highlights underscore our unwavering dedication to excellence, innovation, and community impact as we continue our mission to uplift and empower individuals and families across Pierce County.



# Advocacy

At the core of our advocacy is a deeply human mission, driven by often unheard voices. Our Board, Advocacy Committee, community partners, and individuals with lived experiences all contribute significantly.

The recent ALICE report reveals that in Pierce County, one in three households struggle to meet basic needs, with 48.5% of Black households categorized as ALICE and 13% living below the poverty line. These figures demand action.

We champion legislation to dismantle systems perpetuating poverty and inequality, focusing on housing, food equity, and support services. Each legislative victory on housing and disability support brings us closer to a fairer future.

## Advocacy Focus Areas:

### Basic Needs and Supportive Services

- Housing and Shelter
- South Sound/Washington 211
- Food Equity

### Strong Families

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Guaranteed Basic Income
- Benefits Protection
- Federal Tax Credits and Tax Assistance
- Quality, Affordable Child Care and Early Learning for Families



## Favorable Legislation That Passed:

- Expanding housing supply by supporting public housing authorities in financing affordable housing developments through re-benchmarking area median income limits.
- Accelerating stability for individuals with work-limiting disabilities or incapacity.
- Strengthening assistance programs to meet the foundational needs of children, adults, and families.
- Making changes to the working families tax credit.
- Making permanent and expanding the child welfare housing assistance program.

## Additional Achievements:

- Through a legislative proviso, the State of Washington invested \$1.9 million to support a second cohort for the Growing Resilience in Tacoma (GRIT) guaranteed basic income program in partnership with Department of Social and Health Services, Pierce County, and the City of Tacoma.



*“GRIT has helped me in ways I didn’t expect, and those payments helped me afford the tutoring that my 11-year-old really needed. It’s changed my house for the better. And I’ve felt so much less month-to-month stress since this program started. It feels like I have some room to breathe.”*

– Geno Rosario

# Partnerships

Everything that we do at United Way is done in partnership with the community. Here are some highlights of our partnerships in 2023:



Our newest initiative, **Growing Resilience In Tacoma (GRIT) 2.0**, is a collaborative guaranteed basic income program run by UWPC, in partnership with DSHS, the City of Tacoma and Pierce County. Starting April 2024, **GRIT** will be providing \$500 monthly for 12 months to 175 Tacoma **ALICE** families. Participants are working single head-of-households with children under 18. From our previous **GRIT** project, we know that families used the dollars to reduce debt, pay for basic needs, increase credit, spend more time with their loved ones, and better their mental health. We are grateful for the legislative proviso from the State of Washington to continue into 2025 with a new cohort of families.



UWPC’s Center for Strong Families joins **The Siemer Institute** and **Tacoma Housing Authority** to promote two-generation (2-gen) approaches, addressing the needs of both children and adults. Their aim is to foster academic success and break the cycle of poverty through this partnership for generational success.



With United Ways of the Pacific Northwest, we launched **Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library** as part of a statewide effort to provide books to children ages 0-5. Last year, 23,500 books were provided to Pierce County kids.



211 expanded our Workforce Development Common Referral System with our new partners, **Nine Line Veterans Services**, bringing a new focus to helping veterans improve their lives through housing, employment, and wellness.



# Statement of Activities & Net Assets

For the year ending 12/31/2023 (unaudited)



United Way of Pierce County

	2023	2022
<b>Beginning Net Assets</b>		
(Unrestricted \$11,239,645; *Restricted \$3,145,463)	\$14,612,839	\$14,957,881
<b>Revenues</b>		
Campaign Results	\$1,308,297	\$1,679,813
Campaign Results Donor Designated	\$577,432	\$697,498
100 Year Anniversary Campaign	\$1,174,942	\$1,811,627
Grants, Other Misc. Revenue	\$4,503,052	\$2,641,246
Investment Income including Unrealized Gains	\$1,010,527	-\$981,767
<b>Total Support and Revenues</b>	<b>\$8,574,250</b>	<b>\$5,848,417</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
<b>Program Expenditures</b>		
Distributions to Community Nonprofits	\$2,082,746	\$2,019,088
Gifts in Kind to Community Nonprofits	\$158,939	\$278,665
Community Impact (includes Center for Strong Families)	\$935,578	\$800,006
Betye Martin Baker Human Service Center	\$391,975	\$363,733
South Sound 211 Helpline	\$976,353	\$1,029,409
Other Community Programs	\$174,551	\$170,110
<b>Infrastructure Support:</b>		
Administrative	\$485,407	\$450,193
Fundraising	\$1,116,385	\$986,794
Dues to State and National	\$78,630	\$95,461
<b>Total Investments in the Community</b>	<b>\$6,400,564</b>	<b>\$6,193,459</b>
<b>Ending Net Assets</b>		
(Unrestricted \$13,715,751; *Restricted \$3,070,774)	\$16,786,525	\$14,612,839
<i>*Restricted Net Assets are donor and grant restricted funds to be used for community program investments</i>		
<b>Other Resources Raised and Distributed with Our Efforts:</b>		
SingleCare (formerly FamilyWise Prescription Discount Program)	\$211,924	\$237,475
Reduced Rent for Nonprofit Tenants	\$430,975	\$412,245
Value of Volunteer Hours	\$53,952	\$49,298
Center for Strong Families	\$200,000	\$205,000
<b>Total Other Resources Invested</b>	<b>\$896,851</b>	<b>\$904,018</b>

## Grantors & Sponsors

AMARA (Medina Children's Service)  
Bank of America  
Boeing Employees Credit Union  
Charles Wright Academy  
City of Tacoma  
Coordinated Care  
Costco Wholesale  
First 5 Fundamentals  
Gottfried & Mary Fuchs Foundation  
Mr. Lawrence Garrett  
Greater Tacoma Community Foundation

Harborstone Credit Union  
JC Penney Company  
Kaiser Permanente  
KeyBank  
Florence B. Kilworth Charitable Trust Foundation  
Kitsap Credit Union  
Marco J. Heidner Trust  
Lyft  
D.V. and Ida J. McEachern Charitable Trust  
Murray Family Foundation  
Tom and Meg Names Family Foundation  
NuStar Energy L.P.  
Oscar T. and Olivann Hokold Foundation

PacificSource Health Plans  
Parametrix, Inc.  
Pierce County Government  
Pitney Bowes  
Puget Sound Energy  
Regence Blue Shield  
Reinvent Stockton Foundation  
Rotary of Sumner  
Siemer Institute  
State Farm Insurance  
Colonel Willie Stewart, Sr.  
Tacoma Community College Foundation  
Tacoma Public Utilities

Umpqua Bank  
U.S. Bank  
United Ways of the Pacific Northwest  
James L. Walton  
Washington Information Network 211 (Win211)  
Washington State Department of Commerce  
Washington State Department of Social & Health Services  
Washington State Department of Transportation  
Whisper Foundation  
Within Reach  
WorkForce Central

## Premier Partners

Asia Pacific Cultural Center  
Bank of America  
Boeing Employees Credit Union  
Bethel School District  
City of Tacoma  
Cole Graphic Solutions

Coordinated Care  
Costco Wholesale  
DaVita  
Enterprise Holdings (Enterprise Rent-A-Car)  
FedEx Corporation  
Franklin Pierce School District  
Gene Pankey Motor Co., Inc.  
Harborstone Credit Union

Heritage Bank  
KeyBank  
Kitsap Credit Union  
MultiCare Health System  
NuStar Energy L.P.  
PacificSource Health Plans  
Parametrix, Inc.  
Pierce County Government

Pierce Transit  
Puget Sound Energy  
Puyallup School District  
Regence BlueShield  
Sound Credit Union  
Sumner-Bonney Lake School District  
Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

Tacoma Public Schools  
Tacoma Public Utilities  
Titus-Will Automotive Group  
United Parcel Service  
U.S. Bank  
WaFd Bank  
Washington State Employees Credit Union

## Tocqueville Donors

Anonymous (3)  
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Dr. Stuart Grover & Dr. Pamela Transue  
Mark Hollander  
Joshua Hughes  
Corry and Donna McFarland

Greg and Melanie McFarland  
James and Vicki Murphy  
Dona and Joe Ponepinto  
Kent and Linda Roberts  
William and Della Robertson  
Tony and Megan Saddler  
Willard L. and Maryann Salsgiver

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Summit Trust  
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Lawrence and Donna White  
James and Sally Will, Jr.  
Jeff and Nancy Woodworth  
John and Judy Woodworth  
Thomas Zemek

## Pierce County Dolly Parton Imagination Library Grantors & Sponsors

Amazon  
Imagination Library of Washington  
Korum for Kids Foundation

Puyallup Tribe of Indians  
Rotary Club of Sumner

United Ways of the Pacific Northwest  
Western Washington Fair Association

# Our Vision for Equity

United Way of Pierce County fights for every person in every community every day. We believe that every person is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect, and equal treatment and access to justice. We remain committed to the following:

- United Way is committed to being an anti-racist organization with a focus on racial and social justice.
- We unequivocally denounce structural systemic practices that work to marginalize entire populations of people.
- We work with residents and public and private partners to co-create solutions that ensure everyone has the resources, supports, opportunities and networks they need to thrive and achieve their highest potential.
- We recognize structural racism and other forms of oppression that have perpetuated poverty and contributed to persistent disparities which United Way seeks to dismantle. Our United Way strives to engage community members, especially those whose voices have traditionally been marginalized.
- We commit to leveraging all of our assets (convening, strategic investments, awareness building and advocacy) to create more equitable communities.

[uwpc.org](http://uwpc.org)



United Way of Pierce County

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