FY2025-2026

ANNUAL REPORT

UNITED WAY
Chattahoochee Valley

Across the Chattahoochee Valley, families are working hard to build stable lives. Many are doing everything right, yet still struggle to get ahead as the cost of housing, child care, health care, and everyday necessities continues to rise. United Way believes families deserve more than getting by. We bring people, organizations, and resources together to meet immediate needs while investing in long-term solutions that create opportunity, strengthen communities, and build generational stability.

Through Community Investment grant allocations, United Way invested in accredited nonprofit partners with a proven record of delivering measurable outcomes across housing, food security, health care, youth development, education, emergency assistance, disability services, and family support.

At the same time, United Way continued leading strategies that extend beyond traditional grantmaking. Through the 211 Community Resource Center, Community Schools United, Home for Good, The Basics Chattahoochee Valley, and Resilient Chattahoochee Valley, we strengthened systems, expanded access to resources, and created lasting change by bringing together schools, health care providers, businesses, local governments, nonprofits, and community leaders.

That leadership continued to extend beyond the Chattahoochee Valley. United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley received approval for federal funding to begin planning an expansion of 211 services into uncovered counties across Georgia. The project will create pathways for individuals and families to find available services and resources in communities with fewer local support options. 211 has connected Georgians to health and human services since 1997, yet Georgia remains one of only three states without statewide 211 coverage. Partnerships with the Georgia Institute of Technology, the Low Income Investment Fund, local governments, employers, developers, educators, and nonprofit leaders advanced regional solutions for workforce housing and child care while guiding practical action for working families.

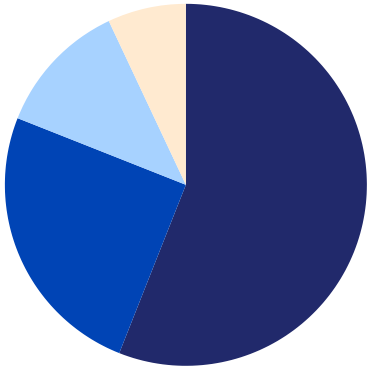
This work is only possible because of people like you. Thank you for standing with us, investing in our community, and helping create a Chattahoochee Valley where every child, family, and neighbor has the opportunity to succeed.

Financials Snapshot (FY2024-25)

Every dollar entrusted to United Way is invested with integrity, transparency, and clear purpose. Guided by data, local priorities, and measurable outcomes, we invest where the need is greatest and the impact is proven. As our community evolves, we continue to innovate our funding model to meet today's needs while building stronger opportunities and lasting stability for generations to come.

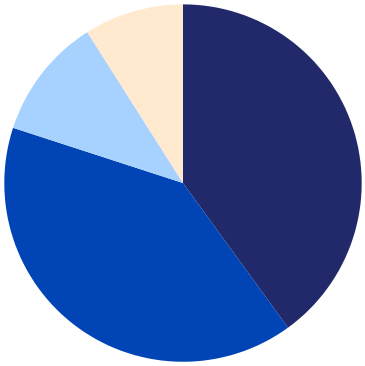
Total Revenue: $11,265,014

- Workplace Campaign (56%)
- Grants (25%)
- Capital Campaign (12%)
- Other (7%)



Total Expenses: $9,473,501

- Community Investment (40%)
- United Way Led Strategies (40%)
- Fundraising Support (11%)
- Organizational Support (9%)



Financial information reflects United Way's most recently approved audited financial statements (FY2024-25).

For more information on how you can help, please contact us:

1005 Front Avenue Columbus, GA
PO Box 1157 Columbus, GA 31902
Phone: 706-327-3255 • Fax: 678-619-0387 • Website: unitedcv.org

Impact Snapshot

136K+
lives changed through services and support

2M+
hours of care provided to children

9M+
meals provided to our community

12K+
calls for help answered by 211

255
community partners engaged

Read the full report at unitedcv.org/annualreport

UNITED WAY
Chattahoochee Valley

Removing Barriers for Working Families

Working families don't experience challenges one at a time. Housing affects employment. Child care affects income. Transportation, wages, and education all intersect. As housing costs outpace wages and parents struggle to find affordable, reliable child care, families are often forced to make impossible choices that affect their financial stability. That's why United Way takes a coordinated, data-driven approach instead of tackling issues in isolation.

For working families, financial stability depends on more than a paycheck. Access to affordable housing and reliable child care can determine whether parents are able to keep a job, advance their careers, and build long-term stability. This year, United Way partnered with the Georgia Institute of Technology to lead a regional workforce housing study through Home for Good and collaborated with the Low Income Investment Fund and Columbus Consolidated Government on a child care workforce study.

These efforts are creating a shared roadmap for action, helping employers, local governments, nonprofits, and community leaders identify priorities and align investments where they will have the greatest impact. The studies highlight practical opportunities to expand workforce housing, strengthen child care options, and support employer-led solutions that help families stay employed and financially secure. Through Home for Good, United Way is convening regional partners to advance housing solutions informed by the study's findings, while the child care study is helping shape collaborative strategies that strengthen workforce stability and support working families across the Chattahoochee Valley.

Investing in What Works

Lasting financial stability isn't built through one service alone. Education, employment, housing, food security, and career support all play a role in helping individuals and families move forward. That's why United Way invests in accredited nonprofit partners with proven results, measurable outcomes, and a shared commitment to creating lasting change across the Chattahoochee Valley.

Through our Community Investment process, local volunteers evaluate programs and direct donor dollars toward trusted organizations making the greatest impact. One of those partners, Goodwill Industries of the Southern Rivers, helped Kayla* pursue a goal that would change the course of her future: becoming the first person in her family to earn a GED. Like many adult learners, she was balancing family responsibilities while navigating housing instability, limited transportation, and other challenges that made continuing her education anything but easy. While participating in the BRIDGE GED Program, she received career coaching, case management, connections to housing and food resources, and interview preparation that helped remove barriers standing between her and success.

Kayla earned her GED, secured stable employment, and helped her family move into safe housing with reliable access to food. What began as a goal to earn a diploma became the foundation for greater stability and new opportunities for her entire family. Today, she continues to encourage new participants by sharing her story, demonstrating how strategic investments in trusted nonprofit partners create opportunities that strengthen families and build a more resilient community.

*Name changed to protect client privacy.

For more information on how you can help, please contact us:

1005 Front Avenue Columbus, GA • PO Box 1157 Columbus, GA 31902

Phone: 706-327-3255 • Fax: 678-619-0387 • Website: unitedcv.org

Read the full report at unitedcv.org/annualreport

UNITED WAY
Chattahoochee Valley

Every Book Opens a New Adventure

A child's love of reading often begins with a simple moment: opening a new book with someone they love. Early literacy doesn't just prepare children for school. It builds vocabulary, strengthens family connections, and creates a foundation for lifelong learning. That's why United Way invests in accredited nonprofit partners that help children discover the joy of reading from the very beginning.

Through our Community Investment process, local volunteers evaluate programs and direct donor dollars toward trusted organizations delivering measurable results. One of those partners, Chattahoochee Valley Imagination Library, mails free, age-appropriate books each month to children from birth through age five. For Lena's family, those books have become treasured moments spent reading together, inspiring curiosity and helping her children develop a genuine love of learning that extends far beyond the pages. During a recent visit to the library, her youngest son was so eager to explore that he headed straight for the children's shelves before the family had even finished taking a photo.

Every new book introduces fresh ideas, new vocabulary, and opportunities for meaningful conversations that continue long after story time ends. Reading has become something the entire family looks forward to, with Lena's older children sharing that same excitement alongside their younger siblings. Those moments are building confidence, strengthening family connections, and creating a lifelong love of learning one story at a time. Stories like Lena's demonstrate how strategic investments in trusted nonprofit partners help children develop the literacy skills, curiosity, and confidence that prepare them for success in school and beyond. After all, every great reader starts with someone willing to turn the first page.

Growing Curious Minds

Learning begins long before a child enters kindergarten. Reading, creativity, conversation, and hands-on exploration help children build the confidence and skills that prepare them for success in school and beyond. A child's first classroom is filled with curiosity, conversation, and discovery, and those everyday moments help shape a lifelong love of learning. United Way invests in early learning experiences that strengthen literacy, spark curiosity, and support children during the years that matter most.

This year, United Way partnered with the Columbus Museum to relaunch Museum PALS, bringing art, storytelling, and creative exploration directly into 32 Pre-K classrooms across Muscogee County. Supported through our United Way-led strategies, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley and The Basics Chattahoochee Valley, each monthly visit connects children with a work of art, a storybook, and a hands-on creative activity designed to strengthen language development, problem-solving, fine motor skills, and early literacy. Teachers also receive books, classroom resources, and art supplies that extend learning well beyond each visit, giving students more opportunities to explore, imagine, and create throughout the month.

By connecting schools, educators, and community partners around early childhood development, Museum PALS is helping more children enter kindergarten ready to learn. Every lesson encourages children to ask questions, express themselves creatively, and discover that learning can be both meaningful and fun. The program reflects United Way's commitment to investing in experiences that build strong foundations for lifelong learning while helping every child develop the confidence, creativity, and curiosity to succeed.

For more information on how you can help, please contact us:

1005 Front Avenue Columbus, GA • PO Box 1157 Columbus, GA 31902

Phone: 706-327-3255 • Fax: 678-619-0387 • Website: unitedcv.org

Read the full report at unitedcv.org/annualreport

UNITED WAY
Chattahoochee Valley

Removing Barriers to Learning

Every child deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed in school. Yet for many families, challenges outside the classroom, such as transportation, access to basic necessities, or other everyday barriers, can make consistent attendance difficult. That's why United Way brings schools, families, and community partners together to address the needs of the whole child, creating supportive environments where students can thrive.

Through Community Schools United, United Way works alongside local schools to connect families with resources, strengthen partnerships, and remove barriers that stand between students and success. At Dorothy Height Elementary School, that commitment came to life through the launch of the PAW (Perfect Attendance Winner) Store. Created in partnership with school leadership and staff, the initiative encourages students to build positive attendance habits while helping families stretch household budgets through access to clothing, toiletries, household essentials, and other everyday necessities. Students earn "Bone Bucks" through perfect monthly attendance, which families use to shop at the store at no cost, reinforcing that every day in the classroom matters.

Community Schools United reflects United Way's belief that student success extends beyond the classroom. By connecting educators, families, businesses, nonprofits, and volunteers around shared goals, the strategy helps schools respond to challenges before they become barriers to learning. Initiatives like the PAW Store demonstrate how strong community partnerships create stronger schools, stronger families, and brighter futures for children across the Chattahoochee Valley.

One Caring Adult Can Change Everything

Every child deserves someone who will stand beside them through life's most difficult moments. For children experiencing foster care, a caring, consistent adult can provide stability, encouragement, and hope during times of uncertainty. United Way invests in accredited nonprofit partners that provide children with dedicated advocates focused solely on their best interests.

Through our Community Investment process, local volunteers evaluate programs and direct donor dollars toward trusted organizations delivering measurable results. One of those partners, Twin Cedars Youth and Family Services, Inc., operates Chattahoochee CASA, which recruits, trains, and supports Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers who speak up for children experiencing foster care. For one young girl, that advocate was Julie, who remained by her side through years of changing placements, court hearings, and uncertainty. She advocated for the child's best interests, gave her a consistent voice throughout the legal process, and reminded her she was never alone. Even after the child's case moved out of state, Julie continued advocating on her behalf, providing one of the few consistent relationships she could count on during more than a decade in foster care.

After years of perseverance, the young girl was adopted into her forever family, with Julie there to celebrate one of the most meaningful moments of her life. That milestone represented more than the end of a court case. It marked the beginning of a future built on stability, belonging, and hope. Stories like Julie's remind us that lasting change doesn't always begin with grand gestures. Sometimes it begins with one caring adult who chooses to show up, speak up, and never give up.

For more information on how you can help, please contact us:

1005 Front Avenue Columbus, GA • PO Box 1157 Columbus, GA 31902

Phone: 706-327-3255 • Fax: 678-619-0387 • Website: unitedcv.org

Read the full report at unitedcv.org/annualreport

UNITED WAY
Chattahoochee Valley

Building Resilience Before Crisis

Resilience isn't something children build on their own. Resilience grows when children and families are surrounded by caring relationships, connected communities, and the right support before challenges become crises. United Way leads Resilient Chattahoochee Valley, our region's coalition within the statewide Resilient Georgia network, bringing together schools, healthcare providers, nonprofits, and community organizations to strengthen behavioral health and expand trauma-informed care.

This year, the coalition partnered with the Pastoral Institute to launch a school-based trauma therapy pilot at Brewer Early Innovation Academy, expand youth support groups, strengthen access to affordable counseling, and train clinicians in specialized trauma-focused care. The Brewer pilot provided ten weeks of on-campus therapy for students identified as high-need while engaging families, equipping educators with trauma-informed practices, and building stronger connections between schools and behavioral health providers. Early results showed students developing healthier coping skills, improved emotional regulation, greater confidence expressing their feelings, and stronger support at school and at home. Teachers and caregivers also reported meaningful improvements in students' communication, classroom engagement, and ability to manage emotions both at school and at home.

Resilient Chattahoochee Valley reflects United Way's belief that healing happens through connection, collaboration, and early intervention. By strengthening partnerships and expanding access to trauma-informed care, United Way is helping children and families receive support earlier, before challenges become barriers.

A Path to Healing

Recovery takes more than one act of kindness. Recovery often begins with safety, but lasting healing requires access to healthcare, stable housing, compassionate support, and a community willing to walk alongside someone through every step of the journey. United Way invests in accredited nonprofit partners that provide coordinated care and help individuals rebuild their lives with dignity and hope.

Through our Community Investment process, local volunteers evaluate programs and direct donor dollars toward trusted organizations delivering measurable results. One of those partners, The Salvation Army of Columbus, operates Grace House, providing emergency shelter and supportive services for women and children escaping domestic violence. When Lauren* arrived at Grace House, she was seeking safety while living with a severe vision impairment caused by her injuries. Throughout her time at Grace House, staff helped her navigate each next step, connecting her with medical care, advocating for her needs, and surrounding her with the support needed to begin rebuilding her life. After a local church member organized a community fundraiser, she received surgery that restored vision in one eye. With improved vision, Lauren was able to qualify for disability benefits, establish a reliable source of income, save up enough to move into a home of her own, and began rebuilding her independence. Coordinated support helped transform a moment of crisis into a foundation for long-term stability.

Lauren's journey is a reminder that healing doesn't happen through one service alone. It happens when compassionate people, trusted organizations, and a caring community work together to remove barriers and restore hope. Today, she has a safe place to call home and a stronger foundation for the future.

*Name changed to protect client privacy.

For more information on how you can help, please contact us:

1005 Front Avenue Columbus, GA • PO Box 1157 Columbus, GA 31902

Phone: 706-327-3255 • Fax: 678-619-0387 • Website: unitedcv.org

Read the full report at unitedcv.org/annualreport

UNITED WAY
Chattahoochee Valley

One Call Can Change Everything

No one plans for a crisis. Whether facing a natural disaster, unexpected job loss, housing instability, or another emergency, knowing where to turn can make all the difference. That's why United Way invests in a coordinated network of care, making it easier for neighbors to find trusted support, navigate complex challenges, and begin rebuilding after crisis.

At the heart of this work is United Way's 211 Community Resource Center, our region's free, confidential resource and referral service that connects people with food, housing, health care, mental health services, utility assistance, and hundreds of other local resources. This year, United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley received approval for federal funding to begin planning an expansion of 211 services into uncovered counties across Georgia, creating pathways for individuals and families to find available services in communities with fewer local support options. 211 has connected Georgians to health and human services since 1997, yet Georgia remains one of only three states without statewide 211 coverage. Every call is answered by a trained specialist who listens with compassion, identifies immediate and long-term needs, and helps connect callers with the right resources. Residents can reach 211 by dialing 2-1-1 or visiting 211uwcv.org to search available resources.

Every call is an opportunity to help someone take the next step forward. 211 helps people navigate their options and connect with the local resources they need. By strengthening connections locally and building pathways to support statewide, United Way is helping more individuals and families find trusted resources and move forward with confidence.

Helping Families Recover After Disaster

No family expects to lose everything in a single day. When disaster strikes, immediate support can make the difference between facing crisis alone and beginning the path toward recovery. That's why United Way invests in accredited nonprofit partners that provide emergency assistance, compassionate care, and trusted support when families need it most.

Through our Community Investment process, local volunteers evaluate programs and direct donor dollars toward trusted organizations delivering measurable results. One of those partners, the American Red Cross, responded immediately when a house fire destroyed the home of a Stewart County family of eight. While the family was away visiting relatives, they lost everything they had built over the previous 20 years, including clothing, medications, treasured belongings, and the place they called home. The Disaster Action Team provided emergency financial assistance and essential supplies, helped replace critical prescription medications, and connected the family with additional community resources. Their immediate response ensured the family had the essentials they needed in the first hours after the fire, allowing them to focus on one another while beginning the long process of recovery. With six children affected by the fire, Disaster Mental Health volunteers also provided emotional support, helping the family begin processing an unimaginable loss while taking the first steps toward recovery. By meeting immediate needs quickly, the response helped restore a sense of stability during one of the most overwhelming moments the family had ever faced.

Because their immediate needs were met quickly, the family could focus on caring for one another instead of worrying about where to find their next meal, replace essential medications, or access the resources needed to begin rebuilding. Stories like this demonstrate how strategic investments in trusted nonprofit partners ensure families across all ten counties of the Chattahoochee Valley receive immediate support when disaster strikes and the resources needed to begin rebuilding.

For more information on how you can help, please contact us:

1005 Front Avenue Columbus, GA • PO Box 1157 Columbus, GA 31902

Phone: 706-327-3255 • Fax: 678-619-0387 • Website: unitedcv.org

Read the full report at unitedcv.org/annualreport