

Acknowledging Our History in Pursuit of Healing and Trust

United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County - *Approved May 18, 2022*

As we come to the close of our centennial year, United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County (UWABC) is reflecting on our impact and accomplishments over the last 100 years, and we are incredibly grateful to the countless volunteers, donors and community partners who made this work possible.

As we look forward to our Next 100 years of service, it is also important to acknowledge the ways that our history harmed others. Doing so helps us learn from our past so that we can be even more effective in the future by rebuilding trust where it has been lost and forming new partnerships across our community on a foundation of transparency. Only by working together can we accomplish our mission to “mobilize and support a robust network of people, partners, and resources to co-create opportunities for every person in our community to live free from poverty and injustice.” As such, the UWABC Board of Directors and staff formally offer the following acknowledgments and commitments:

We Acknowledge that:	We Commit to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of the policies and practices that our investment process utilized over the course of our history effectively excluded programs and initiatives led by smaller, less-traditional, grassroots organizations with BIPOC leadership. • UWABC contributed to narratives that portrayed BIPOC individuals and communities as reliant on our support and services, and therefore incapable of helping themselves. • Many of the terms we have historically used as labels for BIPOC individuals and communities have depicted them by <i>deficits and weaknesses</i>, rather than on the basis of <i>assets and strengths</i>. • Those most impacted by poverty and injustice were too often not in the room as important decisions were being made about our grantmaking strategy and investments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping assets, needs, and power dynamics among individuals and organizations to best understand the community • Advocating for racial equity and justice • Investing in community-led efforts and organizations in alignment with UWABC’s vision, mission and focus • Amplifying and uplifting leadership from BIPOC communities • Implementing equitable convening practices that increase accessibility and value the time, energy and expertise of community residents • Creating intentional processes to ensure that community perspectives inform our strategy, tactics and decision-making • Co-creating innovative solutions and accountability systems with community residents • Recruiting and retaining staff and board members from BIPOC communities throughout all levels of the organization • Ensuring that our marketing and story-telling narratives are accurate, inclusive, and equitable reflection of these communities

These statements are rooted in our guiding principles and belief in the importance of **listening to, learning from, and working with community residents, particularly in communities of color and those with lived experience of poverty, marginalization and injustice**. Without them, we cannot achieve our vision for a “united and resilient community where everyone belongs and everyone thrives.”