



# A NEW PLAN FOR A NEW CENTURY STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-23

UNITED WE WIN

LIVE UNITED



United Way of Asheville  
and Buncombe County

## United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County 2021-2023 Strategic Plan Introduction

### A New Plan for a New Century

As we prepare to celebrate our centennial in 2021, United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County is making a conscious decision to mobilize the incredible resources and relationships we have built over the last century to make targeted, strategic investments that produce more focused results. This means that, moving forward, we will center our work around equity and use the **community school strategy** as the organizing framework to meet our mission, all while adapting to the new realities brought about by a global pandemic. This will require thoughtful and courageous leadership from our board and staff members, along with other UWABC donors and volunteers.

### Key Drivers For Change

In 2019 we identified key drivers that could either hinder our progress, or allow us to accelerate our work in some way. The following factors represent key drivers of the strategic direction articulated by this plan:

#### Our Commitment to Students, Families and the Community School Strategy

Our previous strategic plans positioned the community school strategy as a key element of our work and we are beginning to see meaningful results in our partner schools. This plan builds on these early successes and casts a bold vision for what we can achieve as a community if we focus our efforts and work together.

#### A Commitment To Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

In 2018 we committed to *"Increase our diversity and equity knowledge to strengthen our behaviors, practices and values."* We've taken some good first steps, but it's not enough. When you look at any metric of community well-being and disaggregate the data, it is far too easy to predict on the basis of race alone who will be on top and who will be on the bottom. This plan identifies racism as a root cause of poverty, and recognizes that UWABC can't effectively fight poverty without addressing underlying systems and applying a racial equity lens to everything that we do.

#### New Players, New Leadership

Significant leadership changes rippled through our community last year, as well as enormous changes in the regional philanthropic landscape as a result of the sale of Mission Health. At the same time, it is clear that our commitment to DEI requires that we center the voices of those most impacted by poverty in our work. This plan positions United Way to bolster the critical relationships we will need to achieve our impact objectives.

#### Our Centennial

June 2021 marks our 100th anniversary. This moment provides a unique opportunity for us to re-introduce the "Next Century" United Way to our long term partners and the wider community. This plan capitalizes on this historic milestone and invites our community, and potential investors, to learn who we are and what we do.

## Coronavirus and Covid-19

Nowhere on our original list of key drivers did we list a global pandemic. While none of us knows what lies ahead, we do know that the impacts of COVID-19 are experienced disproportionately by low-income communities and communities of color, and that innovative, equity-centered strategies to fight poverty are needed now more than ever. This plan addresses the short- to medium-term need to respond to this crisis directly, as well as the long-term economic recovery needs, particularly for those most vulnerable.

## A New Vision, Mission, Focus and Guiding Principles

As we prepare for our second century of work, we need to be crystal clear about who we are, why we exist, and what we stand for. This new plan lays out a new vision, mission, and focus that will serve as a north star to all of our work.

How we show up in our community is just as important as what we do. The newly formed Guiding Principles in this plan will serve as an outward-facing promise and an inward-facing set of standards for all board, staff, and volunteers.

## A Bold Community Goal

Our focus makes it clear that the community school strategy will now serve as the central organizing framework for everything that we do. But for this strategy to be successful, it will require a results-based accountability framework, including an ambitious goal that is owned and supported by our whole community.

The Community Schools Cross Sector Leadership Team (CSCSLT) is a newly formed committee of United Way board members, staff, and diverse community leaders representing public education, higher education, public health, nonprofits, law enforcement, elected officials, parents and youth. The CSCSLT is the group charged with building broad consensus about the Bold Community Goal, and mobilizing our community to achieve it.

With input from more than 150 youth and community representatives, we've established this goal:

*By 2035, ALL Asheville City and Buncombe County students graduate from high school ready and fully prepared to pursue their goals and dreams.*

This clear and specific Bold Community Goal serves both as a rallying cry for our community and as a public promise to attain meaningful results for students and families. It is an important step in adhering to our guiding principle of accountability.

### Rationale

So why do we believe that this Bold Community Goal is the right accountability metric for realizing our vision for a *united and resilient community where everyone belongs and everyone thrives*?

We know that thriving and belonging in today's society requires a high quality education, and that graduating from high school ready for college and/or a career is a powerful predictor of future economic and health outcomes.

We also know that academic success is too often undermined by issues related to hunger, homelessness, interpersonal violence, poor health conditions and other social problems. We believe that these factors,



often referred to as the “social determinants of health,” are also powerful determinants of education. As such, we must acknowledge that the “opportunity gap” isn’t just an indicator of a problem within our schools, it is an indicator of a host of problems throughout our community. And because so many of these problems are embedded in inequitable systems, addressing them requires an equity-centered, systems-oriented approach.

**A Community School is a systems-based, equity-centered strategy that coordinates relationships and resources through a public school to accelerate equitable outcomes in health, education and employment.** And there is strong empirical evidence—both nationally and locally—that the community school strategy works. Once we establish strong and successful full-service Community Schools as a proof-of-concept, the model can be replicated across all K-12 feeder patterns in the Asheville and Buncombe County school districts—and beyond.

Backbone organizations are an essential ingredient of successful collective impact efforts, and the community school strategy is no exception. UWABC’s track record of mobilizing a community-wide network of people, partners and resources to effect change in Buncombe County makes us the right organization to serve as the backbone agency for our collective efforts to scale and sustain Community Schools and achieve our Bold Community Goal.

## Meeting the Moment

This plan is being launched at a crucial moment in global history. Depending on the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic on our community, nation and world, we may need to adjust our plan. But one thing is clear: **the impact of this crisis is both exposing and exacerbating the barriers that keep people from living free from poverty and injustice.** This fact makes the need to refocus our resources on the most strategic interventions possible that much more urgent.

But doing so won’t be easy. Executing this plan will require us all to be uncomfortable, make hard decisions, and fight for our community in ways we have never done before. Now more than ever, such acts of courageous leadership will be necessary if United Way of Asheville Buncombe County is to extend and expand our legacy of impact into the next century.

## United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County: 2021-2023 Strategic Plan

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| <b>Vision</b>  |
| A united and resilient community where everyone belongs and everyone thrives   |
| <b>Mission</b>   |
| We 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 |
| <b>Focus</b>   |
| We employ the community school strategy as the organizing framework for elevating student success, supporting families, and engaging communities throughout Buncombe County      |

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|--|
| <b>Guiding Principles</b>  |
| <b>Equity at the Center</b><br>Recognize and challenge the dominant culture narratives, norms and power structures that prevent all people from belonging and thriving |
| <b>Courageous Leadership</b><br>Live out our Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles with empathy and compassion, even when difficult or unpopular                      |
| <b>Collective Wisdom</b><br>Ensure that our work is guided by community expertise, including the lived experience of people most impacted by poverty and injustice     |
| <b>Embracing Change</b><br>Continuously learn, innovate and evolve to confront emerging challenges and opportunities   |
| <b>Accountability Driven</b><br>Earn community trust through dependability, transparency and a commitment to achieving results   |

**>>> Bold Community Goal:** By 2035, ALL Asheville City and Buncombe County students graduate from high school ready and fully prepared to pursue their goals and dreams.<sup>1</sup>

## Three Year Picture

| Impact   |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 15% decrease in the number of students at established community schools who are off-track on attendance, behavior, or core course grades; with a 25% decrease in the gap between white students and students of color and in the gap between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students.</li><li>• At least 9 community schools in place, of which at least 2 are full-service community schools<sup>2</sup></li><li>• 100% of United Way ABC partner investments align with Bold Community Goal</li><li>• Partners from all phases of cradle to career pathways sign on to Bold Community Goal</li><li>• Asheville Buncombe Youth Development Network grows to include all Bold Community Goal partners</li><li>• Cross-Sector Leadership Team fully engaged and working with clear direction</li><li>• Public policy that supports Bold Community Goal has been implemented</li><li>• NCCARE360/NC 211 fully integrated with community school strategy and Bold Community Goal</li><li>• NC 211- Asheville Call Center remains AIRS accredited</li></ul> |
| Community Engagement   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 100% of volunteer engagement aligns with Bold Community Goal</li><li>• Parents and youth authentically represented on United Way ABC Board, committees, Community School resource teams and at United Way ABC events</li><li>• At least double % of people of color on staff, Board, leadership, and committees</li><li>• A broad base of community support for the Community School strategy and the Bold Community Goal has been established (advocacy)</li></ul>  |
| Resource Development   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• \$5 million in annual diversified revenue raised</li><li>• 4-6 million in Centennial Campaign raised, which includes endowment, accelerator fund, capital and planned giving</li><li>• Regional 2-1-1 is valued and supported by state and regional partners</li></ul>   |
| Finance and Operations   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• United Way Worldwide digital engagement strategy and tools have been fully integrated</li><li>• Top priority functions fully supported, including Community Schools infrastructure, Equity, Human Resources, and Grants management</li><li>• United Way ABC building more accurately represents our vision, mission, focus, and guiding principles</li><li>• At least 90% of staff feel engaged in their role</li></ul>  |

<sup>1</sup> Final goal language to be developed by the Community Schools Cross-sector Leadership Team and the Youth Leadership Team

<sup>2</sup> Requires, at minimum, a school-based health clinic, and formal NCCARE360/211 Navigator access

# One Year Plan

## ONE YEAR KEY METRICS (completion by 6.30.2021)

| Impact  | Community Engagement   | Resource Development   | Finance and Operations  |
|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 community schools<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Asheville Middle School and Erwin Middle School are full service<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• 90% of callers learn new information about community resources by calling 2-1-1</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of volunteer engagement aligned with Bold Community Goal or COVID-19 response and recovery</li> <li>• At least 25% people of color on staff, Board, leadership and all United Way committees and workgroups</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of Regional 2-1-1/NCCARE 360 operational costs are supported by United Way of NC and other regional partners</li> <li>• \$4.5 million annual revenue and an additional \$2 million in Centennial Campaign<sup>5</sup></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% of staff feel engaged in their role</li> </ul> |
| <b>STRATEGIC GOALS</b> By June 30, 2021, UWABC will:  |  |  |   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Maintain the infrastructure needed to connect individuals and organizations to the resources they need to overcome barriers created by the COVID-19 crisis.</li> <li>2) Create a functional model for current and desired positions that clearly reflects our guiding principle of Equity at the Center and our 2020-23 strategic plan, including a timeline for when new positions will be added and how we will pay for them</li> <li>3) Ensure that the Cross-sector Leadership Team and Youth Leadership Team use the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework to establish and pursue clear goals aligned with the Bold Community Goal and have diverse memberships representing grassroots and anchor institutions</li> <li>4) Utilize a clear communications strategy and engagement strategy that leverage the Centennial anniversary to build widespread awareness, engagement and financial support for the new strategic plan, including the Bold Community Goal</li> <li>5) Establish formal partnerships with WNC health legacy and other private foundations, resulting in multi-year funding for core strategies and at least \$1.5M in revenue annually</li> <li>6) Fully adopt and train appropriate staff on new finance and operations software and systems, including all shared digital services prioritized through United Way Worldwide</li> <li>7) Develop and implement transition plans and communications plans to fully align volunteer engagement and grantmaking strategies with the Bold Community Goal</li> </ol> |  |  |   |

<sup>3</sup> Reynolds Middle and two additional schools, with the two additional schools being phased in at the end of FY21

<sup>4</sup> Requires, at minimum, a school-based health clinic and formal NCCARE360/211 Navigator access

<sup>5</sup> \$4.5 million annual revenue covers baseline impact level plus Reynolds; \$2 million Centennial revenue includes \$1.2M in "CS accelerator fund" and \$800,000 in the David Bailey Legacy Endowment.