



## United Way Fact-A-Day

1. What does United Way do? **United Way leads the fight for the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community.** We go beyond temporary fixes to tackle the underlying causes of critical issues.
2. This year is United Way's 100<sup>th</sup> year serving central Iowa. For 100 years, United Way has led the fight for the health, education and financial stability of ALL central Iowans. Because if people are unhealthy, in poverty or failing in school, then **the status quo is never good enough.**
3. United Way and our community have set bold Goals for 2020 in the areas of Education, Income and Health.
  - In Education, we will increase the percentage of central Iowa students who graduate from high school to 95%.
  - In Income, we will increase the percentage of central Iowans who are financially stable to 75%.
  - In Health, we will increase central Iowa's Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index score to 64.5.

These goals are destinations, not aspirations. To see the progress we're making toward these goals, visit the [Community Impact Report](#) on United Way's website.

4. United Way invests in 146 community impact programs representing 84 partner agencies, in the areas of education, income and health—the building blocks for a good quality of life.

5. United Way does much more than programs. We pull together experts from all segments of central Iowa to seek out our community's toughest challenges, set strategies and goals, then tackle these challenges at their roots... fighting them together, in a UNITED Way.
6. Adjusted for constant 2015 dollars, United Way has raised a cumulative \$1.3 billion in its 100-year history. Those dollars are contributed by central Iowans, and stay in central Iowa, addressing community issues in education, income and health—the building blocks to a good quality of life for everyone.
7. Today, **1 in 4 central Iowa third graders** do not read proficiently. They are **FOUR TIMES** more likely to eventually drop out of school. **United Way's READ to SUCCEED** initiative is a groundbreaking, community-wide awareness and action campaign to help kids get the skills they need to be proficient readers so they can succeed in school and beyond. READ to SUCCEED is United Way's signature campaign for its 100<sup>th</sup> year.
8. **United Way's Graduation Walk** is held one Saturday morning each year, when hundreds of volunteers hit the streets to call on the homes of students to help them make the best decision of their life: to graduate from high school. Graduation Walk volunteers deliver a powerful message to the students and their families: that we care about them and their success.
9. Did you know **33,000** central Iowa adults do not have a high school diploma? Dropouts earn hundreds of thousands of dollars less over their working lives. United Way's **Bridges to Success** will help 10,000 of these adults earn their high school equivalency degree so they can go on to gain the skills, training and confidence to get a better job and achieve financial stability.
10. **34.7 percent of central Iowans are not financially self-sufficient.** They are just one flat tire, one child's fall on the playground, or one refrigerator repair away from disaster. They can't afford that unexpected expense, which makes them unable to get to work or pay their rent. OpportUNITY is a community-driven game plan to help people out of poverty and into

financial stability through education, employment-readiness, housing, food security and public policy changes.

11. **VITA**, United Way's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, unites trained and certified volunteers to help thousands of lower-income people complete their tax returns. This year, VITA volunteers helped return over \$8.3 million to the pockets of 5,666 hard-working central lowans.
12. **United Way 2-1-1** is a three-digit phone helpline that connects people to resources like counseling, housing, utility assistance, elder care or food. It's free, confidential and available 24/7.
13. **Let's Go 5-2-1-0** is a United Way-led childhood obesity prevention program that promotes 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day, less than 2 hours of recreational screen time on their computer, TV or phone, 1 hour of physical activity and 0 sweetened drinks.
14. In central Iowa, more than four children out of 10 start kindergarten without the literacy skills they need to learn and succeed. That's why United Way supports a network of quality early care and learning centers in our community's lowest-income neighborhoods. Last year, 2,372 children age 0-5 participated in high-quality early literacy programs.
15. For 12 consecutive years, United Way of Central Iowa has earned a four-star rating from Charity Navigator—the largest independent evaluator of charities and nonprofits. This rating means United Way is best in class for sound fiscal management and commitment to accountability and transparency. Only 1% of the 8,500 charities have earned four stars for 12 years or more.
16. During the summer months, children can lose up to three months of academic progress from the previous year. United Way's **Summer in the City** programs provides 2,000 children and youth with quality, enriching summer programming. Many children actually improved their literacy skills over the summer, preventing the "summer slide."

17. One in eight central lowans—65,000 people—are considered food-insecure. United Way supports the community-wide network of food pantries and community gardens, which provide a local source of fresh, healthy produce.
18. Adults who experienced childhood trauma, known as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), are twice as likely to have diabetes and three times as likely to have heart disease. The United Way-led ACEs 360 Policy Coalition unites business, education, health care and nonprofits to raise awareness about the lifelong impacts of childhood trauma, advocating for statewide children's response systems.
19. United Way supports the **Evelyn K. Davis Center for Working Families**, a one-stop shop in Des Moines that helps central lowans with job training, skill development, financial education and Income and Work Supports such as benefits screening, income tax preparation and access to public benefits.
20. **Book Buddy** sends United Way volunteers into local early learning centers to reach children in the critical year before kindergarten, helping them build the pre-reading skills they need for a strong start in school. For 40 minutes a week, volunteers read one-on-one with four-year-old students, using a library of 25 books and an engaging curriculum developed in collaboration with Des Moines Public Schools. Last year, the children showed 66% improvement in pre-literacy skills.
21. United Way unites over 40,000 donors, 10,000 volunteers, hundreds of local businesses and nonprofit organizations to lead the fight for the education, health and financial stability of all central lowans. Together we create real and meaningful change. That means we continue to build central Iowa into a world-class community for all of us.
22. United Way's **Day of Action** is the largest single day of corporate volunteer service, held each year in September. This year, over 3,000 volunteers representing 52 companies will fan out across the community, volunteering to benefit central Iowa nonprofits.

23. United Way has launched a NEW group exclusively for young professionals. **LINC**—which stands for Lead, Impact, Network, Change—to harness the power of those under age 30 to give, advocate and volunteer to help kids and families. You can join LINC with a donation of \$250, then join your like-minded young professionals in volunteering and fun social activities.
  
24. United Way is a strong and trusted voice at the state capitol. **United Ways of Iowa** is a neutral, nonpartisan organization that advocates for health and human service public policy affecting Iowans. Recent successes include \$12.5 million in funding for adult basic education and career pathways, and a change in state rules so that Iowans can keep their child care benefits when preparing for a new job.
  
25. In Iowa, 55% of the available jobs require training and education beyond a high school diploma. That's why United Way supports **Central Iowa Works**, a local partnership that brings together employers and workers to prepare central Iowans for these skilled jobs.