

United Way of Central Iowa Fact-A-Day

Here are facts you can break up into daily or weekly emails to send to staff throughout your campaign to help them see the impact of their investment in United Way.

1. What does United Way do? United Way of Central Iowa leads the fight for the health, education, and financial stability of every person in central Iowa. It goes beyond temporary fixes to tackle the underlying causes of critical problems in our local community.
2. For 100 years, United Way of Central Iowa has brought people together to tackle our community's toughest challenges. Because if people are hungry, families live in poverty, or children cannot succeed in school and, therefore, may not succeed in life—the status quo is never good enough.
3. United Way unites our community to achieve Goals for 2020 in Education, Income, and Health:
 - a. In Education, we will increase the percentage of central Iowa students who graduate from high school to 95% -- currently at 93.6%
 - b. In Income, we will increase the percentage of central Iowans who are financially self-sufficient (250% of the federal poverty level) to 75% -- currently at 65.9%
 - c. In Health, we will increase central Iowa's Gallup-Sharecare Well-Being Index score, a comprehensive measure of health, to 64.5 – currently at 62.6

These goals are destinations, not aspirations. They are what drive United Way of Central Iowa's work every day. To view progress toward these goals, visit www.unitedwaydm.org/2018-community-impact-report

4. United Way invests in 135 community impact programs representing 75 partner agencies, in the areas of Education, Income and Health—the building blocks for a good quality of life. It also invests in Essential Needs as the foundation to succeed in the priority areas. Learn more at www.unitedwaydm.org/funded-partners.



5. United Way does more than fund programs. It pulls together experts from all segments of central Iowa to seek out our community's toughest challenges, set strategies and goals, and then tackle these challenges at their roots... fighting together, in a UNITED Way. United Way of Central Iowa specifically focuses on creating change in Polk, Warren, and Dallas Counties, and evaluates every investment to ensure our community makes meaningful progress toward our Goals for 2020.
6. Central Iowa is the number one per capita community for giving to United Way in the country among campaigns that raise more than \$25 million. More than 32,000 donors give to United Way of Central Iowa each year so that all central Iowans have a chance at a better life.
7. Dollars invested in United Way of Central Iowa stay local. They go to programs and initiatives in Polk, Warren, and Dallas Counties that expert volunteers determine will have the most impact in meeting our community's Goals for 2020 in Education, Income, and Health.
8. Over 10 years, the rate of central Iowa students who graduate high school has increased by more than 10 percentage points, according to data from the Iowa Department of Education. This means 4,162 more students have graduated high school over 10 years than would have if the graduation rate remained the same. Our community is making a difference toward our Goals for 2020. www.unitedwaydm.org/education
9. Nearly 1 in 4 central Iowa third graders are not reading proficiently, according to data from the Iowa Department of Education. These students are FOUR TIMES more likely to drop out of high school. United Way's READ to SUCCEED initiative is a community-wide call-to-action to help kids gain reading skills so they can succeed. www.read2succeed.org
10. In central Iowa, 30 percent of central Iowa kindergarteners started school without the skills needed to learn, according to the Iowa Department of Education. That's why United Way's Women United leadership group supports a network of quality early care and learning centers in our community's lower-income neighborhoods. Last year, 3,321 children ages 0-5 participated in high-quality early literacy programs.



11. Students who participate in after-school programs attend more school and perform better on tests compared with their peers (Durlak et. al.). Last year, 23,351 children participated in United Way-funded out-of-school programs, improving their attendance and grades.

12. United Way's Graduation Walk, held on a Saturday morning each year, brings hundreds of volunteers to visit the homes of middle and high school students at risk of dropping out. Graduation Walk volunteers deliver the powerful message: We care about you and we want you to succeed. Over six years, Graduation Walk has encouraged more than 2,200 students to graduate.

13. 95 percent of first-graders in low-income communities who need glasses do not have them. United Way of Central Iowa is working with Vision To Learn to provide glasses to central Iowa students who need them. Last school year, 736 students at 22 central Iowa schools received glasses.

14. 11,003 more central Iowans were financially self-sufficient in 2016 from the previous year, according to the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Central Iowa is moving closer toward its Goal for 2020 of increasing the percentage of central Iowans who can afford basic needs and thrive.

15. 55 percent of all jobs in central Iowa require some postsecondary education up to an associate degree, but only 32 percent of the workforce has the right skills for these jobs, according to Iowa Workforce Development. United Way of Central Iowa helps adults acquire the skills they need for the jobs employers need to fill. Since 2009, 13,103 more adults have progressed toward or obtained an associate degree (U.S. Census).

16. 34.1 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. OpportUNITY is a community-driven effort to fight poverty by removing barriers and increasing opportunities in areas including child care, housing, food, employment readiness, and more. View the recently released plan at www.opportunitydsm.org.

17. Did you know that 35,000 central Iowa adults do not have a high school diploma (U.S. Census)? A high school dropout earns an average of \$700,000 less throughout their lifetime than a high school graduate. United Way's Bridges to Success initiative has helped 1,640 adults earn their high school equivalency degree over two years and has successfully advocated for legislation to expand pathways for earning an equivalency diploma, so more adults can go on to gain the skills, training, and confidence to get a better job and achieve financial stability.
18. \$9.2 million in tax refunds went to central Iowans with the help of 190 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) volunteers and through MyFreeTaxes, both United Way programs.
19. 40 percent of central Iowa's health care workers could retire in 5-10 years, according to Iowa Workforce Development. In a year, United Way's Central Iowa HealthWorks has enrolled 245 participants in health care education and training to earn jobs that pay an average of \$41,000 a year.
20. More than one in three central Iowans report experiencing daily stress, according to the Gallup-Sharecare Well-Being Index. United Way of Central Iowa works to improve more than physical health by focusing on building social connections and community well-being. In 2017, United Way helped lead a project in the 50314 ZIP code that engaged 2,150 residents in building relationships, improving neighborhood safety, and engaging youth.
21. Only half of central Iowans consume produce and work out at recommended levels, according to the Gallup-Sharecare Well-Being Index. Over two years, 51,000 children have learned healthy habits in schools, health care clinics, and child care centers through United Way's 5-2-1-0 initiative. 5-2-1-0 promotes 5 servings of fruits and vegetables, less than 2 hours of recreational screen time, 1 hour of physical activity, and 0 sweetened drinks per day.
22. For 13 consecutive years, United Way of Central Iowa has earned a four-star rating from Charity Navigator—the largest independent evaluator of charities and nonprofits—putting the organization among the top 1 percent of all charities nationwide. This rating means United Way is best in class for sound fiscal management and commitment to accountability and transparency.



23. 86 percent of households earning less than \$15,000 annually live in housing they cannot afford (paying more than 30 percent of their income). Central Iowa needs 8,350 affordable housing units to meet current needs (Polk County Housing Trust Fund). Housing is one of eight areas the OpportUNITY plan to fight poverty is working to address to help more central Iowa families thrive.
24. United Way's 2-1-1 call center received nearly 25,000 calls in 2017 from central Iowans who needed help with essential needs such as housing (5,558 calls), food (1,265 calls), and legal assistance (1,187 calls). 2-1-1 is available to connect callers with local assistance 24/7. Callers can dial 2-1-1, text their ZIP code to 898211, or visit 211iowa.org.
25. Nearly 30 percent of Polk County households were food insecure, meaning they didn't know where their next meal would come from at some point during 2017 (DMU Department of Public Health Food Insecurity Survey). United Way-supported pantries and shelters distributed 104,475 meals and food items over the past year. Giving Gardens volunteers donated 10,911 pounds of fruits and vegetables to food pantries and corporate giving gardens, feeding 4,364 central Iowans last year.
26. Book Buddy sends 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. 10 percent more of the students who participated in Book Buddy were reading proficiently three years later compared with their peers.
27. United Way engages 10,000 volunteers each year through many efforts to improve our community. Over three years, United Way has engaged nearly 500 new volunteers to read weekly with elementary school students through Power Read. Volunteers also commit to creating literacy kits to go to at-risk students, preparing tax return forms to help low-income families, and encouraging students to return to school through Graduation Walk.
28. United Way's Day of Action is the largest single day of corporate volunteer service, held each year in September. This year, more than 3,000 volunteers representing nearly 50 companies will fan out across the community, volunteering to benefit central Iowa nonprofits.



29. LINC harnesses the power of those ages 30 and under to give and volunteer to improve central Iowans' access to essential needs, such as food and housing. Learn more at www.lincdsm.org.

30. United Way is a strong and trusted voice at the state capitol. Recent advocacy successes with partner coalitions include laws that increase pathways to achieve a high school equivalency diploma, allow citizens returning from prison who committed non-violent crimes to keep their driver's license so that they can more easily obtain a job, and all teachers to have training in adverse childhood experiences and trauma-informed care.

31. By sixth grade, chronic absenteeism is a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school. Students may begin missing school for a variety of reasons: they are disengaged, feel unsafe, or have family care and job responsibilities. Missing school puts students at risk to fall behind in class and have lower test scores. Education Leadership Initiative focuses on investing in strategies proven to help middle school students successfully transition into high school and graduate. Learn more at www.unitedwaydm.org/eli