



United Way of the Lowcountry



We are pleased to share with you an overview of the impactful work United Way of the Lowcountry (UWLC) is doing to transform lives in Beaufort and Jasper counties. Our mission is to educate and encourage our community to invest in programs that enable individuals and families to achieve self-sufficiency. Through strategic partnerships and collaboration with local nonprofits, government agencies, and community organizations, we address key areas like basic needs, education and economic mobility.

Last year, our efforts helped meet more than 239,000 needs in our community, providing crucial support to vulnerable populations. Whether through programs like our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, which processed over \$2 million in tax refunds for local residents, or initiatives like our Community Impact and Early Grade Reading initiatives, UWLC remains committed to ensuring that everyone in our community has the opportunity to thrive.

As we continue to build a stronger, more self-sufficient Lowcountry, we are deeply grateful for your support. Together, we are making a lasting impact and creating a brighter future for all.

Thank you for your partnership in this vital mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale Douthat".

Dale Douthat
President and CEO
United Way of the Lowcountry

UNITED IS THE WAY



United Way of the Lowcountry



Dale Douthat
President and CEO
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ddouthat@uwlowcountry.org

Our Vision

To build a united community where everyone is self-sufficient.

Our Mission

To educate and encourage our community to make investments that enable individuals and families to achieve self-sufficiency.

Our Guiding Principles

CHAMPION IMPACT: Cultivate connections that fuel collective action and spark transformative community change.

SHINE A LIGHT: Illuminate every step, every dollar, every impact, because transparency fuels our mission and lights the path to real change.

LIVE UNITED, NOT DIVIDED: Seek to understand before being understood. Respect differences. Celebrate diversity. Lead with intentionality. Build an equitable community together.

OWN IT: Be accountable for your actions. Lead others by your example. Grow your emotional self-awareness to build relationships that foster trust and respect.

CHALLENGE THE PROCESS: Always seek a better way. Seize the opportunity for ongoing improvement.

BE THE STRETCH: Learn continuously. Cultivate growth in your colleagues and community by going beyond what you think you can do.

UPHOLD TRUST: Prioritize building trust by safeguarding sensitive information with the same dedication we devote to empowering our community. Embrace upholding internet security and maintaining confidentiality as vital pillars of our mission.

THINK WE BEFORE ME: Prioritize team and community over self. Lead with a servant's heart. Always consider how your actions impact others.

Our task is too big to do alone and too important not to do together.

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COMMUNITY IMPACT

Last year, 239,146 needs were fulfilled in Beaufort and Jasper Counties.

Awarding grants to local nonprofit organizations through our Community Impact Fund is just one strategy United Way uses to empower individuals and promote self-sufficiency to create a brighter future for the residents of Beaufort and Jasper counties. This strategy encourages innovation, sustains and enhances existing programs and services, and supports collaborative efforts in order to achieve community impact goals that were created by our community.

We currently fund 35 PROGRAMS at 21 LOCAL NONPROFITS.

Through our Community Impact funding process, UWLC partners with nonprofit agencies in Beaufort and Jasper counties to focus on common goals and outcomes in:

BASIC NEEDS: Health, Food & Housing

United Way and our partners are dedicated to helping community members on their path to self-sufficiency by addressing their immediate emergency needs. We provide essential resources and support in the areas of health, food, and housing, ensuring that everyone has a strong foundation to build a better future. Meeting these basic needs is the first step toward achieving long-term self-sufficiency and stability.

EDUCATION: Childhood & Youth Success

United Way believes that every child deserves the opportunity to build a brighter future for themselves and their families. That's why we're funding programs and services that promote cognitive, social, and emotional development; literacy; mentorship; financial literacy; and job skills.

ECONOMIC MOBILITY: Dependent Care & Adult Success

United Way is empowering community members with the skills and resources they need to achieve long-term success through dependent care programs, job training, financial wellness classes and more. The result is a thriving community where everyone has more opportunity to succeed.

Together, we are prioritizing opportunities for self-sufficiency, ensuring that the support we provide is sustainable and makes a lasting impact in the Lowcountry.

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COMMUNITY IMPACT: HELPLINE & 2-1-1

Last year, 2,431 calls for advocacy and support were answered by our HELPLINE; 1,076 additional calls were processed through the 2-1-1 referral service.

HELPLINE | 843.524.4357

United Way of the Lowcountry's **FREE HELPLINE** offers health and human services information, referral, advocacy and support to help callers find the assistance they need to address the everyday challenges of living as well as those that develop during times of disaster and other community emergencies. By working closely with our funded agencies, we ensure the HELPLINE does not duplicate services.



Our HELPLINE staff answer questions Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. about where to find help with:

Rent/Utility Assistance
Food Banks
Shelter

Childcare Resources
Physical/Mental Health
Employment Services

Elderly/Disabled Services
Credit Counseling
& more...

UNITED WAY ASSOCIATION of SOUTH CAROLINA'S 2-1-1

SC 2-1-1 information and referral is a free, confidential service of United Way Association of South Carolina that connects individuals to health and human services. Anyone can access this service 24 hours a day, seven days a week by dialing 2-1-1 from a landline or mobile phone; texting 2-1-1-2-1-1 or visiting www.SC211.org. Interpreters are available for individuals who do not speak English.



Get Connected. Get Help.™

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COMMUNITY IMPACT: CharityTracker

Last year, 3,370 households received assistance from United Way and other area nonprofits using CharityTracker

United Way of the Lowcountry is committed to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of community service providers in Beaufort and Jasper Counties. **To achieve this goal, we provide free access and training to the CharityTracker database to any nonprofit agencies in the region.**

What is CharityTracker?

CharityTracker is a robust, cloud-based database that offers a secure and efficient platform for managing and sharing case information. Adhering to HIPAA standards, it ensures the confidentiality of sensitive data while enabling agencies to:

- **Gather and report statistical data:** Track key metrics to inform resource development, strategic planning, and outcome measurement.
- **Collaborate with other agencies:** Foster connections and partnerships to address community challenges more effectively.
- **Make data-driven decisions:** Leverage insights from the database to improve service delivery and outcomes.

Why is a Shared Database Important?

A shared database empowers service providers to:

- **Improve efficiency:** Streamline processes and reduce duplication of efforts.
- **Enhance service delivery:** Connect individuals in need with appropriate resources more quickly.
- **Address root causes:** Identify and address underlying issues contributing to poverty and hardship.
- **Foster collaboration:** Promote partnership and cooperation among agencies.

How Does Our Community Benefit?

By utilizing CharityTracker, our nonprofit community is working together to create a more efficient, effective, and compassionate service delivery system. Real-time updates provided by the system enable prompt decision-making, eliminating concerns about duplicate services from other agencies. The database facilitates seamless sharing, referral, and notification among agencies, ensuring swift and efficient assistance, thereby enabling us to deliver optimal case management to those we serve.

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COMMUNITY IMPACT: Poverty Simulation

Experience Poverty Firsthand: Become a Champion for Change

Have you ever wondered what it's like to live paycheck to paycheck? To worry about putting food on the table, paying rent, and accessing basic necessities? Our Poverty Simulation offers a unique opportunity to understand these challenges firsthand.

What is a Poverty Simulation?

This immersive experience puts you in the shoes of a low-income family, navigating realistic scenarios like job searches, transportation issues, childcare, and unexpected expenses. You'll interact with community resources and experience the stress and uncertainty of living on the edge.

Through this simulation, you'll gain valuable insights into:

- **The complex realities of poverty:** Understand the daily struggles faced by individuals and families.
- **Systemic barriers:** Learn about the obstacles that hinder upward mobility and perpetuate poverty.
- **The power of community:** Discover the crucial role of support systems in addressing poverty.
- **The importance of empathy:** Develop a deeper understanding of the human experience and the need for compassion.

More than just an exercise, the Poverty Simulation is a catalyst for action. Participants often leave the experience inspired to make a difference in their communities.

Who Can Participate?

The Poverty Simulation is FREE and open to everyone! Businesses, government agencies, faith communities, school groups, and individuals are encouraged to participate.

Interested in Hosting a Simulation?

Contact us today to learn more about scheduling a Poverty Simulation for your group. Together, we can raise awareness, build empathy, and create a more equitable community.

Let's work together to address poverty and create a brighter future for all.

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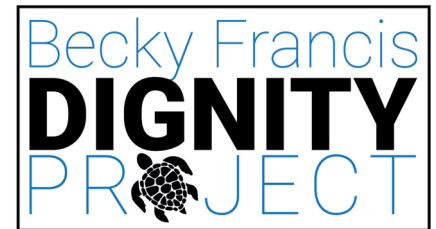
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COMMUNITY IMPACT: Becky Francis Dignity Project

The Becky Francis Dignity Project is focused on offering empowerment opportunities that create a strong foundation for individuals and families to work towards self-sufficiency while maintaining the dignity they deserve. **There are several interconnected, high-level goals that can be categorized into three main areas:**

Meeting Basic Needs:

- **Increase access to safe and secure shelter:** This is the most crucial goal, as stable housing is the foundation for addressing other challenges.
- **Ensure access to nutritious food:** Good nutrition is essential for physical and mental health.
- **Provide hygiene facilities and services:** Mobile showers and laundry trailers, as will be discussed soon, can play a role here.
- **Offer medical and mental health care:** Homeless individuals often have higher rates of chronic health conditions and mental health issues.



Promoting Self-Sufficiency and Reintegration:

- **Develop employment skills and opportunities:** Help people find jobs and gain financial independence.
- **Offer educational opportunities and job training:** Education and skills training can open doors to better employment prospects.
- **Provide support services for mental health and addiction recovery:** Address underlying issues that might hinder progress towards self-sufficiency.
- **Assist with finding permanent housing:** Connect individuals with resources and support to transition into stable housing.

Building a Supportive Community:

- **Reduce stigma and discrimination:** Promote public understanding and acceptance of the homeless population.
- **Strengthen social connections:** Combat social isolation and foster a sense of belonging.
- **Advocate for systemic changes:** Work towards policies and programs that address the root causes of homelessness, such as poverty and lack of affordable housing.

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COMMUNITY IMPACT: Dignity in Action

Backpacks for the Homeless

This program distributes backpacks filled with essential items to homeless individuals in our area. Backpacks are assembled through donations and fundraising efforts. Partnering with community organizations and law enforcement ensures backpacks reach those in need.

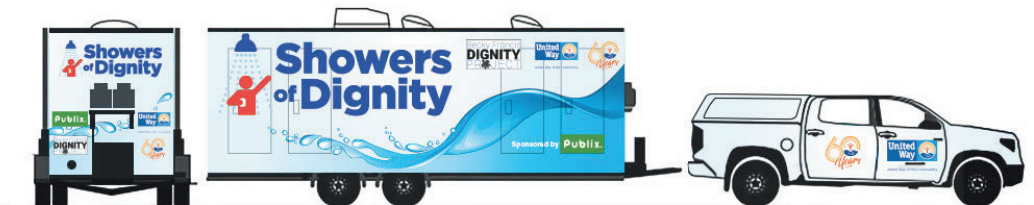
Homeless ID Program | HID

Lack of identification is a significant barrier for homeless individuals seeking access to essential benefits and services. This program bridges this gap, empowering them to access critical support and improve their overall well-being.

Showers of Dignity

Our Showers of Dignity mobile shower trailer is a lifeline, offering more than just a clean body. Our mission is to uplift individuals experiencing homelessness or recovering from disaster by providing essential hygiene services and connecting them to resources for rebuilding their lives. Key features include:

- **Mobility and Accessibility:** Our self-contained 24-foot trailer can be deployed anywhere in Beaufort and Jasper counties, reaching those in need directly.
- **Independence:** Requiring no external water or power sources, we ensure operational flexibility.
- **Efficiency:** The compact design allows for easy transportation and setup, maximizing service delivery.
- **Privacy and Dignity:** Two private shower stalls, including one ADA-compliant, provide a respectful and comfortable experience.
- **Comprehensive Care:** Beyond showers, we offer laundry services and essential hygiene supplies to support overall well-being.
- **Partnership for Progress:** We collaborate with local organizations to provide wrap-around services, connecting individuals with resources for housing, employment, and healthcare.



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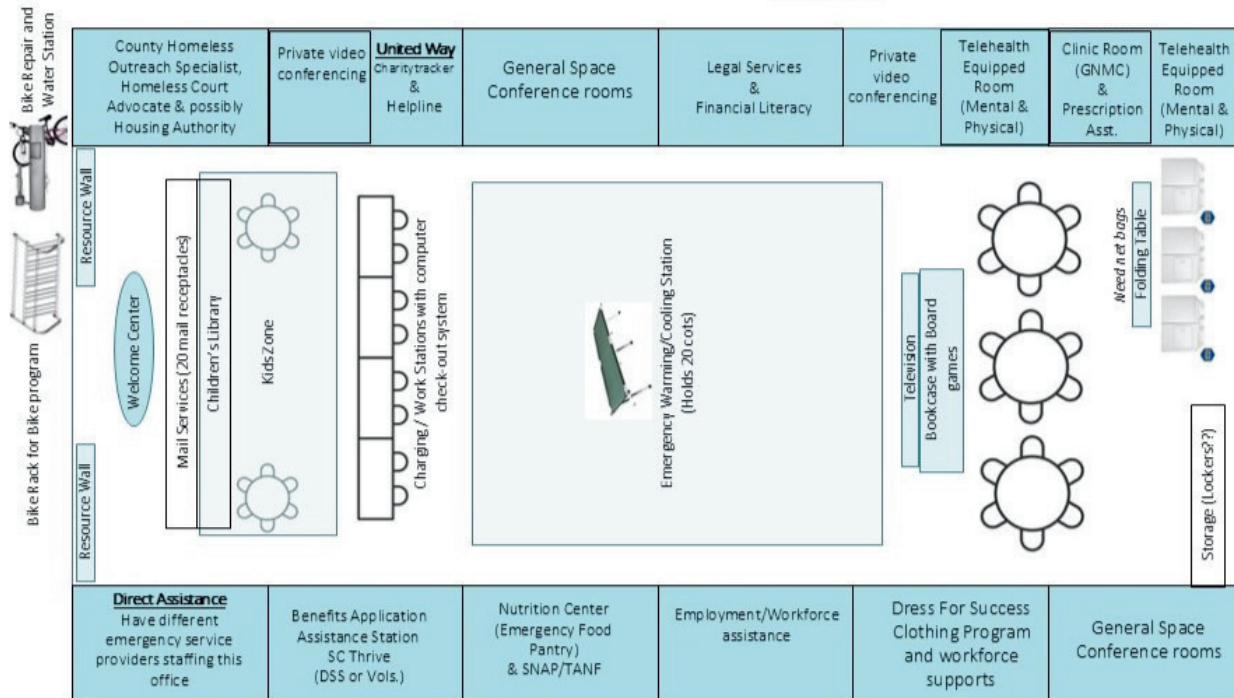


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COMMUNITY IMPACT: Dignity in Action

Navigation Station

The Navigation Station (under development) is a physical embodiment of the collaborative efforts needed to solve community problems. By consolidating services under one roof, we aim to streamline the process for individuals seeking assistance, reducing barriers and increasing accessibility to vital resources. By offering a comprehensive suite of services, we aim to break the cycle of poverty and empower individuals to achieve self-sufficiency. Likewise, bringing together diverse partners and programs under one roof will eliminate service fragmentation, streamline access, and create a supportive environment for individuals to achieve their personal goals.



Potential Partners

- Employment & Training
- Financial Literacy
- Housing & Homeless
- Healthcare & Wellness
- Childcare & Youth Development
- Basic Needs Assistance



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EDUCATION IMPACT: Read Indeed!

Last year, 1,348 students took part in our early childhood literacy programs; 21,570 books were gifted to students participating in those programs.

A child learns to read until the fourth grade. After that, they read to learn. With the help volunteer tutors, United Way of the Lowcountry's Early Grade Reading Initiative works directly in the classroom with Pre-K through third graders to help ensure children in Beaufort and Jasper counties are prepared for success in school.

Pre-K: Play Partners

- **Dialogic Reading Strategies:** Engaging children in interactive book discussions to promote comprehension and vocabulary development.
- **Integrated Social and Emotional Learning:** Supporting children's emotional well-being and social skills through book-based activities.
- **Promoting School Readiness:** Offering stimulating and developmentally appropriate books and activities to prepare children for academic success.
- **Aligned with Classroom Curriculum:** Books and activities complement the existing Creative Curriculum for a seamless learning experience.
- **Home Library Extension:** Children take books home to foster independent reading and family engagement.

Kindergarten: Read to Me

- **Interactive Read Aloud:** Enhancing vocabulary and oral language skills through engaging read-aloud experiences.
- **Home Library Extension:** Children take books home each week to encourage independent reading.

1st through 3rd Grade: Guided Reading

- **One-on-One Tutoring:** Providing individualized support to increase vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, confidence, and phonemic awareness for students in need.

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EDUCATION IMPACT: Women United

Last year, more than 1,055 students in need received school supplies and backpacks through Women United initiatives.

Women United is a vibrant community of philanthropic women leaders who are committed to improving education opportunities for children and women in underserved areas of Beaufort and Jasper counties.

Operation Backpack

Women United's Operation Backpack initiative provides more than 1,000 backpacks filled with essential supplies to students in need each school year. By equipping students with the necessary tools for learning, Women United aims to break down barriers that may hinder their academic success and help them start the school year on a positive note. The group collaborates with school social workers to identify students who would benefit most from this program and ensure that backpacks are delivered to schools prior to the start of the school year.

Mimi's Closets

Mimi's Closets provide essential school and personal supplies to students in need throughout the school year. These special teacher supply closets are stocked with a variety of donated supplies, including school essentials as well as basic needs items like pull-ups and hygiene and first aid products.

Breaking Barriers to Education Fund

Women United's Breaking Barriers to Education Fund helps address financial challenges that may hinder students' ability to attend school or reach their full potential. Administered by the United Way of the Lowcountry **HELPLINE**, the fund works directly with school officials to remove financial barriers and ensure that students have the resources they need to succeed.

Women United Scholarship Fund

The Women United Scholarship Fund supports local, non-traditional female students pursuing higher education degrees at the University of South Carolina Beaufort or Technical College of the Lowcountry. Since its inception in 2020, Women United has awarded \$24,500 in scholarships to 20 local women.

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COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance | VITA

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provides free tax return services to Lowcountry residents with low to moderate incomes, processing more than \$2 million in refunds for 2,168 individuals this past year. VITA supports those facing financial hardship, including individuals with disabilities, seniors, and those with limited English proficiency. This year, 81 volunteers across 13 sites contributed 8,983 hours, saving filers more than \$500,000 in tax preparation fees and improving their financial well-being.



SCORE

UWLC partners with SCORE to offer a Nonprofit Training Series, providing valuable training on topics such as Grant Writing, Volunteer Management, Strategic Planning, Fundraising and more. Our goal is to empower local nonprofits with the knowledge and tools they need to operate effectively and provide the highest quality services to our community.



Lowcountry Early Childhood Coalition | The Basics Lowcountry

UWLC staff person serves as chairperson of the Lowcountry Early Childhood Coalition (LECC), a group of organizations focused on improving early childhood development which is essential in order for our children to thrive. The LECC has launched The Basics Lowcountry to address this issue so that the youngest members of our community get the best opportunity for success possible.



Families in Transition | FIT

UWLC staff person serves as Chairperson of Families in Transition (FIT), a group of basic needs providers in Jasper County that meet to network and collaborate to ensure Jasper residents most basic needs are met.



FAMILIES IN TRANSITION
Serving Jasper County

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COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Community Wide Strategic Plan

United Way is leading the effort to bring key stakeholders and agencies together to create a unified action plan to address issues affecting Self-Sufficiency. **We have engaged a community change consultant, 1000 Feathers, to help us on this journey and expect the project to be completed at the end of 2025.**

This plan aims to unite nonprofits, local governments, schools and agencies to work together so that they can leverage resources and expertise to create innovative solutions. 1000 Feathers is guiding an 18-month process focusing on:

- **Defining the Challenge:** Setting goals, analyzing data, and gauging community readiness.
- **Engagement & Connection:** Fostering partnerships and gathering community input.
- **Customized Recommendations:** Prioritizing focus areas and co-creating actionable plans.
- **Supporting Change:** Implementing and supporting the comprehensive plan.

Through collaboration and data-driven decision making, the proposed plan will empower individuals, promote self-sufficiency, and ultimately lead to greater overall prosperity for all residents.

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Gifts That Make An Impact Now

If you would like to help us lead the way in uniting our community to improve lives today and foster self-sufficiency, consider the giving options below—many of which have financial and personal benefits for you.

Gifts of Appreciated Securities

You can use stocks, bonds and mutual funds that have appreciated in value to support our shared vision. You may receive a charitable income tax deduction for the full market value of the stock (up to a maximum of 30% of your adjusted gross income) and avoid paying the capital gains tax on any increase in the value of the stock.

Qualified Charitable Distribution

You can transfer funds from your IRA directly to United Way of the Lowcountry. This is an effective way to have an immediate impact and ensure our work of helping all individuals and families achieve their human potential through education, income stability and healthy lives. Here's how it works:

- You must be 70 ½ or older.
- An individual may transfer up to a total of \$105,000 per year. A married couple may give up to \$210,000.
- Your gift must be transferred directly from the IRA account to United Way of the Lowcountry.
- Your gift is a transfer of funds from your IRA to United Way of the Lowcountry so it does not count as income for the year.
- If you are 73 and older, the transfer of funds counts towards your annual Required Minimum Distribution from your IRA.

Please note: If you are still working and contributing to a retirement account, this gift could impact your taxable income.

Donor-Advised Fund

You can use your donor-advised fund (DAF) to make a one-time gift, or to create a recurring monthly or quarterly gift for even more impact.

Matching Gift Opportunities

Did you know your gift to United Way of the Lowcountry could be doubled through your company's matching gift program? It's easy—just check with your HR department or contact us for help. With one quick request, you can multiply your impact in the community at no extra cost.

Memorial or Tribute Gift

When you give a memorial or tribute gift for United Way of the Lowcountry to honor someone special, you're expressing your love, admiration, and gratitude in one of the most meaningful ways there is. Your gift will honor your loved one, create a lasting tribute and help change lives in Beaufort and Jasper counties.

Please consult a qualified advisor before making a gift.

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