

United Way Celebrates 100 Years Of Impact In The St. Louis Area

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Helping people.



United Way
of Greater St. Louis

ST. LOUIS - As United Way of Greater St. Louis marks its centennial anniversary this year, its president and CEO, Michelle Tucker, says this is only the beginning for the organization.

“This year is a very special milestone in recognizing our local United Way’s impact in building a strong safety net for our region throughout the past century,” said Tucker. “Now, we have the opportunity to build on our legacy to launch the next century of helping people.”

Initially called the Community Fund, the organization began in 1922 when community members and leaders joined together to create a simple, unified approach for supporting multiple nonprofits. Through its first annual campaign, businesses and residents raised \$1.1 million for 40 local charities. Today, United Way of Greater St. Louis supports more than 160 local nonprofits serving a 16-county region in Missouri and Illinois. The organization’s most recent fundraising campaign raised over \$67 million.

Tucker noted that over its 100-year history, the local United Way has raised and invested nearly \$3 billion into hundreds of nonprofits and programs.

“Our United Way continues to be one of the top ranked United Way’s in the nation for fundraising, a true testament to the generosity and passion of this region,” said Keith Williamson, 2022 board chair for United Way of Greater St. Louis and president of Centene Charitable Foundation. “This is certainly a year to recognize the commitment and tireless work of thousands of donors, staff and volunteers, through many challenging periods in history, to raise billions of dollars to help people in need. Everyone in our community should be proud of this accomplishment.”

As United Way looks to the future, Tucker said they are even more committed to helping people by providing critical wraparound services and supports through five priority areas: essential needs, youth success, jobs and financial security, health and wellbeing, and crisis response. She noted that through United Way’s deep experience in serving the community and strong partnerships, the organization is uniquely positioned to advance the way individuals and families receive health and human service in the future.

“We are now able to marry technology with high-touch services that will be a game changer for helping people,” Tucker said. “Our goal is to not just support single needs here and there, but to look at health and human services as a whole and help individuals and families along a path to success.”

To celebrate its anniversary, the organization is encouraging the community to visit [HelpingPeople.org](https://www.HelpingPeople.org) to share their hopes for the region in the next 100 years.

“This year is not only a celebration of our 100 years; it’s a call to action – a time to look at where the need is today and how we can be most effective in creating a stronger, healthier and more equitable St. Louis community,” noted Tucker. “We are looking forward to our next 100 years and what we will accomplish together.”

United Way of Greater St. Louis Key Dates and Highlights

1922: Then called the Community Fund, a group of local businesses and leaders raises \$1.1 million for 40 charities. Today, our United Way supports more than [160 local nonprofits](#), including some of those initial agencies like Annie Malone, Salvation Army, Urban League, International Institute, and YMCA.

1933: What is now known as the [Volunteer Center](#) launches and is led by two women. Today, our Volunteer Center connects more than 20,000 local people each year to organizations and causes in need of volunteers.

1942: United Way's campaign reaches the milestone of raising over \$5 million in one year. Now, the St. Louis region raises approximately \$70 million each year through United Way to help local people and strengthen our community.

1955: The City of St. Louis and 43 other St. Louis companies introduce payroll deduction for employees to donate to the then-called United Fund. Today, over 1,000 local companies and 90,000 individuals unite each fall and give their time, talent and treasure through United Way's campaign

1975: The board of directors elects to change the organization's name to United Way of Greater St. Louis.

1978: United Way of St. Clair merges with United Way of Greater St. Louis and in the following decades, several other affiliate mergers follow. Today, United Way of Greater St. Louis serves a [16-county region](#) in Missouri and Illinois, helping 1 million local people each year.

1987: United Way forms its first [leadership group](#), the de Tocqueville Society, to recognize supporters who give \$10,000 or more annually to the organization. Today, more than 8,000 local people engage with United Way through six leadership groups, including the Men's Leadership Society, Women's Leadership Society, Charmain Chapman Leadership Society, Multicultural Leadership Society and United Young Leaders.

1993: United Way raises and invests \$1.8 million for victims of the Flood of 1993. Today, United Way is a leader in regional crisis response, such as the COVID-19 pandemic when we raised and invested nearly \$2 million into programs and organizations helping impacted people.

1994: [Charmaine Chapman](#) becomes the first African American and first woman president and CEO. Charmaine's legacy lives on today through the Chairman Chapman Leadership Society, a group of more than xxx African American leaders who give \$1,000 or more through United Way's campaign.

2004: United Way is one of the first to introduce an online giving software for corporate campaigns, launching ePledge as a new way for giving in the dawn of technology and the Internet. Today, United Way continues to innovate ways for donors and volunteers to engage and connect in philanthropy.

2007: United Way 2-1-1 launches in the St. Louis region. Today, 2-1-1 enables people to find help through a mobile app, text service and online chat, annually connecting over 120,000 each year to help for their needs.

2018: United Way introduces its custom strategies, launching new ways for companies to partner together to meet their corporate social responsibility goals. Today, United Way works with companies throughout the region on signature programming, foundation support, targeted giving and more.

2020: United Way releases a comprehensive, region-wide Community Needs Assessment and evolves its community investment strategy to align funding decisions directly with meeting community need.

2021: United Way spearheads the [Community Information Exchange](#), in partnership with over 200 local social service agencies and healthcare institutions, a network using innovative technology and enables shared resources, electronic referrals and coordinated care to serve the whole person and family.

About United Way of Greater St. Louis

United Way of Greater St. Louis mobilizes the community with one goal in mind — helping people live their best possible lives. Located throughout 16 counties in Missouri and Illinois, United Way helps one in three people in the region build a foundation for a good quality of life through basic needs, financial stability, education, health and strong communities. For more information, contact 314-421-0700 or visit? www.HelpingPeople.org.