



# ONWARD 860 >>>



1924 **YEARS** 2024



United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut



**Eric Harrison**  
President and CEO



As United Way approached its Centennial year of service, we set out to better understand disparities in central and northeastern Connecticut. We reviewed education, economic and health data while also going on a listening tour, engaging groups from across the region in Community FIRST Conversations.

We heard about people’s desire to Unite the region and to make the 860 a place where your zip code does not determine your future.

United Way is uniquely positioned to leverage public and private partnerships to catalyze change in central and northeastern Connecticut.

In this report, we examine key issues, including disparities in child care, housing, workforce and life expectancy.

As we embark on our Centennial year and celebration, we hope you will join us in co-creating a bold future where everyone has the chance to succeed.

Together, we will close gaps and create opportunities to build a brighter future for all.

In gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric Harrison'.

Eric Harrison  
President and CEO  
United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut

## SAVE THE DATE!

Join us for United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut’s

# Centennial Gala

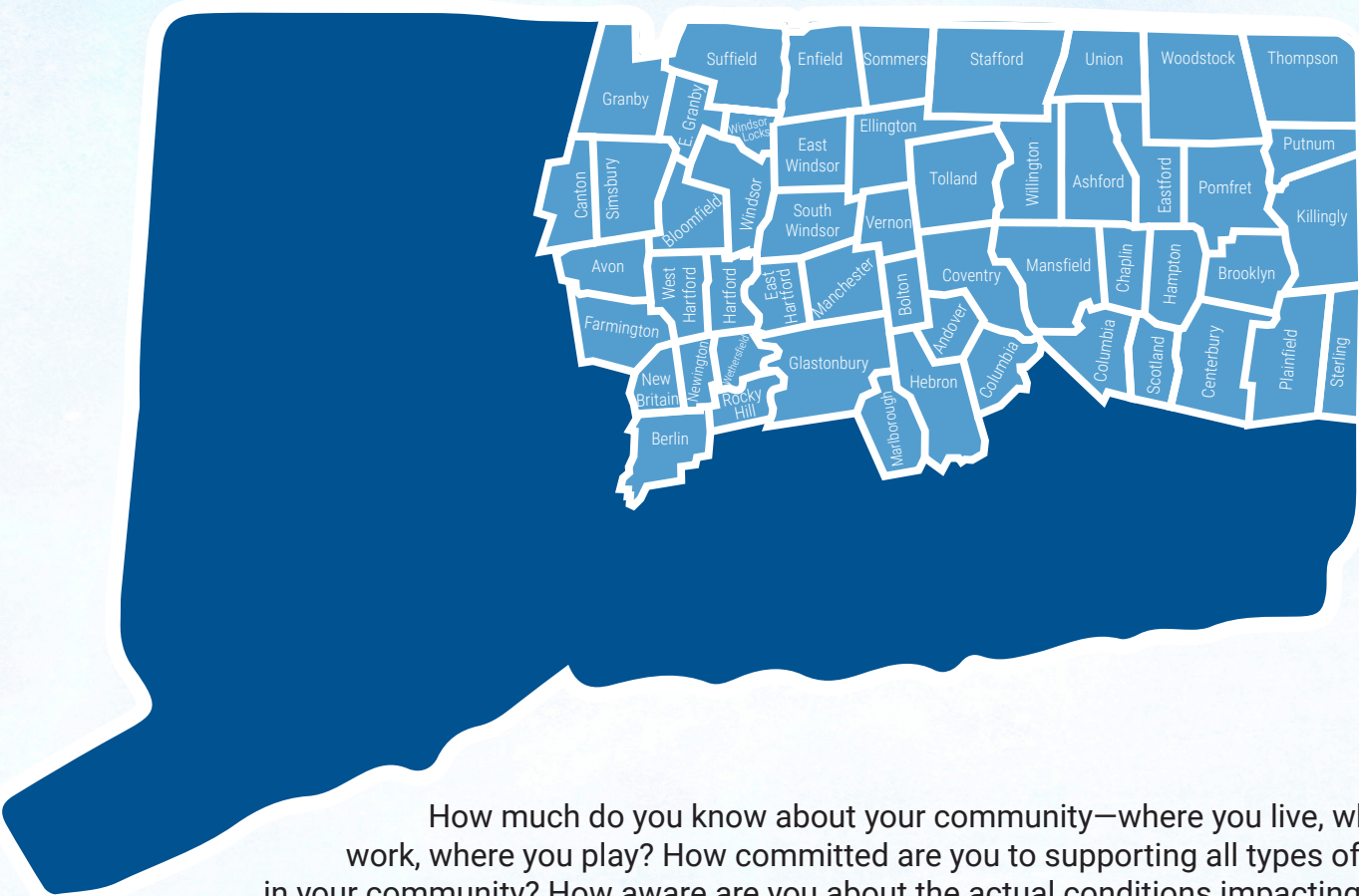
taking place

**Saturday, December 14, 2024**

**6:00 – 11:00 p.m.**

at the Connecticut Convention Center

# COMMUNITY CONDITIONS



How much do you know about your community—where you live, where you work, where you play? How committed are you to supporting all types of people in your community? How aware are you about the actual conditions impacting children, adults and families?

How do you measure the signs of well-being, equity and quality of life in the 860 region?

These are some of the questions we asked ourselves and our community as we prepared for our centennial, an important milestone in our organization’s history.

Your community deeply impacts your overall well-being. They go hand-in-hand. Individual well-being thrives with community well-being.

Feeling a sense of safety in your community encourages physical and mental well-being because it fosters a sense of comfort and goodwill among neighbors.

Findings indicate there is a stark inequality throughout our state. We face pronounced segregation by race and income—leading to resource disparities in some neighborhoods. This segregation also means more advantaged groups may not benefit as much from diversity in their communities.<sup>1</sup>

Overall, when it comes to well-being, Connecticut ranks well compared to other states—but do these rankings consider the disparity levels?

<sup>1</sup> Greater Hartford Community Wellbeing Index 2023, DataHaven, [ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven\\_GH2023-web.pdf](https://ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven_GH2023-web.pdf)

# POVERTY BY THE NUMBERS

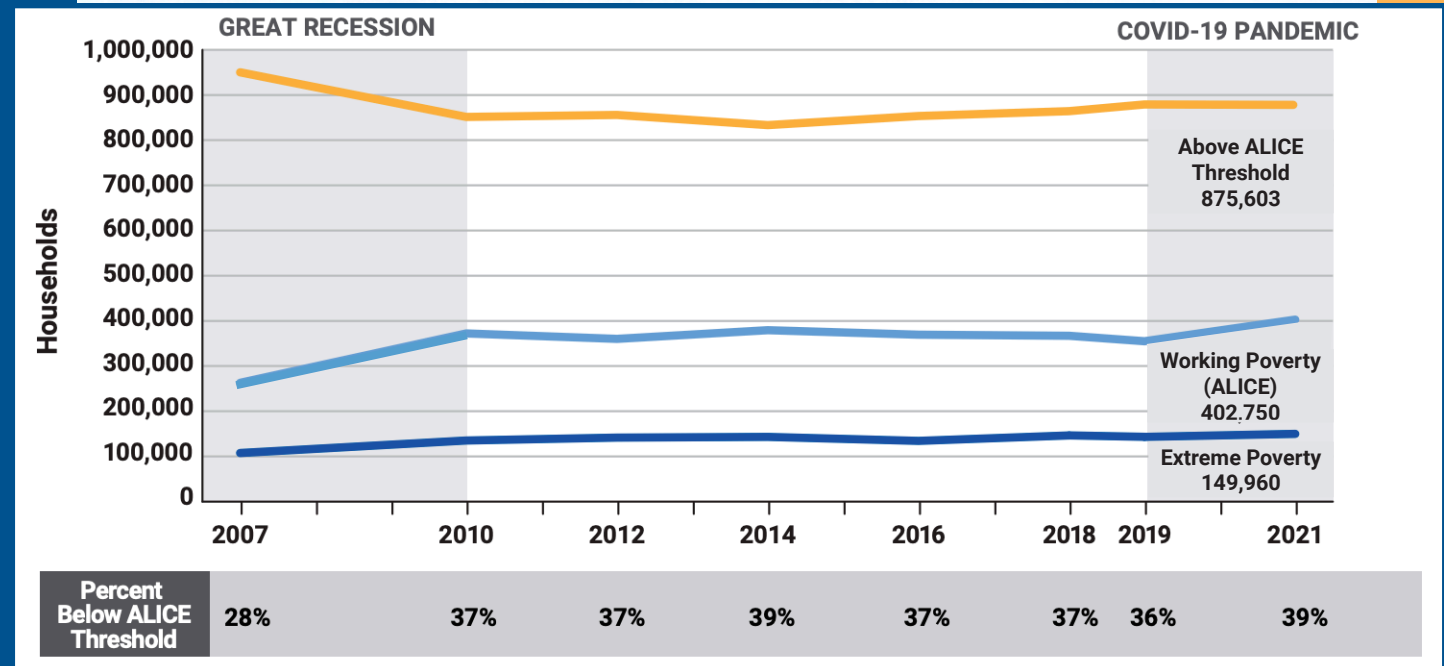
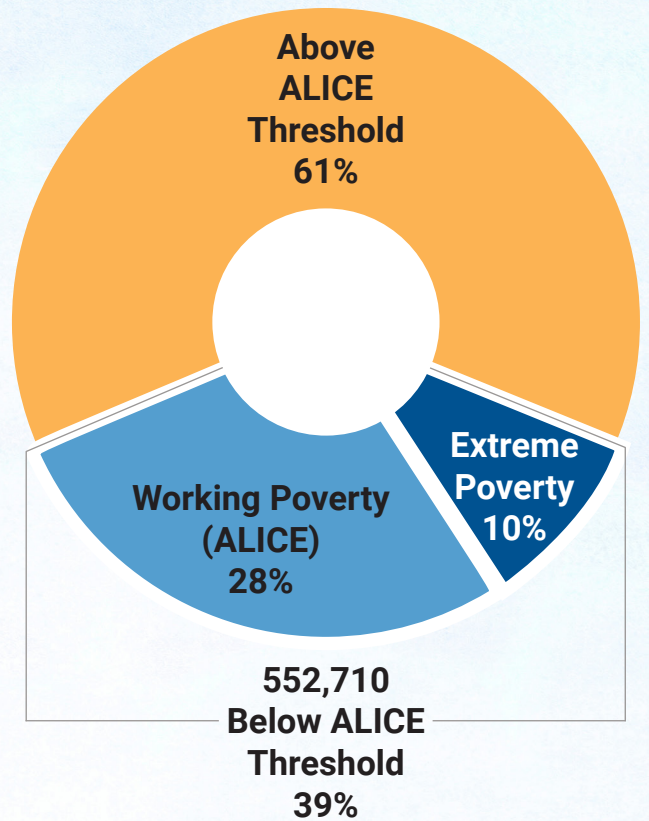
Connecticut is a state with a higher cost of living, meaning that the Federal Poverty Level is not an adequate measure of what financial hardship looks like in our state. Connecticut United Ways collaborated to bring The ALICE Report to our state in 2013. ALICE is a United Way-coined acronym that stands for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed. The report establishes a household survival budget based on cost of living from available data sources.

As of the release of the last report in 2023, nearly 40 percent of households in central and northeastern Connecticut were struggling to make ends meet. This includes households who are living below the Federal Poverty Level.

Wages have not kept pace with the rising cost of living, meaning that affording the basics is simply out of reach for many families in our region.

ALICE households, experiencing working poverty, are one emergency away from financial crisis and households living below the Federal Poverty Level are experiencing extreme poverty.

Poverty is at the root of many of the challenges people in our region face every day. In this report, we examine key issues, including early childhood, housing, workforce and health outcomes.





Early childhood is an imperative time for children to cultivate cognitive, social, emotional, independence, adaptability and listening skills—and to develop cultural awareness, creativity and imagination.

Access to child care, healthy food, education and health services and exposure to diversity help ensure the well-being of children in our region.

## Child Care

Overall, there is not enough child care in the 860 region. Child care providers have enough licensed slots for a little over one-third of the region's children from birth through age four.

Child care issues also include accessibility. Child care centers may not be located in the communities where they are needed the most—or they may not be accessible by public transit or provide transportation.<sup>2</sup> Costs are also a critical issue.

## Food Insufficiency

Taking a closer look at households across the 860 region, those below the ALICE Threshold reported higher instances of food insufficiency for their children compared to those above the Threshold.<sup>3</sup>

## Child Literacy

Encouraging children to read helps them achieve developmental and academic milestones.

According to the 2023 ALICE Report, two-thirds of students in our United Way's service area were not reading at grade-level. Comparatively, a year later, nationally, 71 percent of parents below the ALICE Threshold said that their child was prepared for the academic year ahead, compared to 81 percent of parents above the Threshold.<sup>4</sup>

## Preventative Care

ALICE households impacted by cost and transportation barriers often postpone health care for their children. In fall 2021, Connecticut households below the ALICE Threshold reported they were 15 percent more likely to miss, delay or skip their child's preventative check-ups compared to those above the Threshold.<sup>5</sup>

## Access to Diversity

Students are positively impacted by having diverse teachers, adults and peers. And students of color benefit when educators share cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Across several metrics, schools are becoming less segregated and more diverse.<sup>6</sup>

Both the student and educator populations in Greater Hartford public schools have become more diverse; however, changes among educators are not keeping up with those of their students. In the 2021 to 2022 school year, 53 percent of students but only 11 percent of educators were people of color.<sup>7</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Greater Hartford Community Wellbeing Index 2023, DataHaven, [ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven\\_GH2023-web.pdf](https://ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven_GH2023-web.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> ALICE in Connecticut: 2023, Connecticut United Ways

<sup>4</sup> ALICE in Connecticut: 2023, Connecticut United Ways

<sup>5</sup> ALICE in Connecticut: 2023, Connecticut United Ways

<sup>6</sup> Greater Hartford Community Wellbeing Index 2023, DataHaven, [ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven\\_GH2023-web.pdf](https://ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven_GH2023-web.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Greater Hartford Community Wellbeing Index 2023, DataHaven, [ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven\\_GH2023-web.pdf](https://ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven_GH2023-web.pdf)

# THE ISSUES: HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is a challenging issue. Making significant impact in our community requires collective efforts.

Housing issues in Connecticut—particularly in the 860 region—are a result of income and wealth inequality and a scarcity of affordable homes.

Regionally, homeownership rates and values vary by race, ethnicity and income. There are large gaps in rates by race and income—and they may be growing. Mortgage applicants’ debt levels and credit profiles vary along demographic lines—which creates additional racial and income disparities in home values and home ownership.<sup>8</sup>

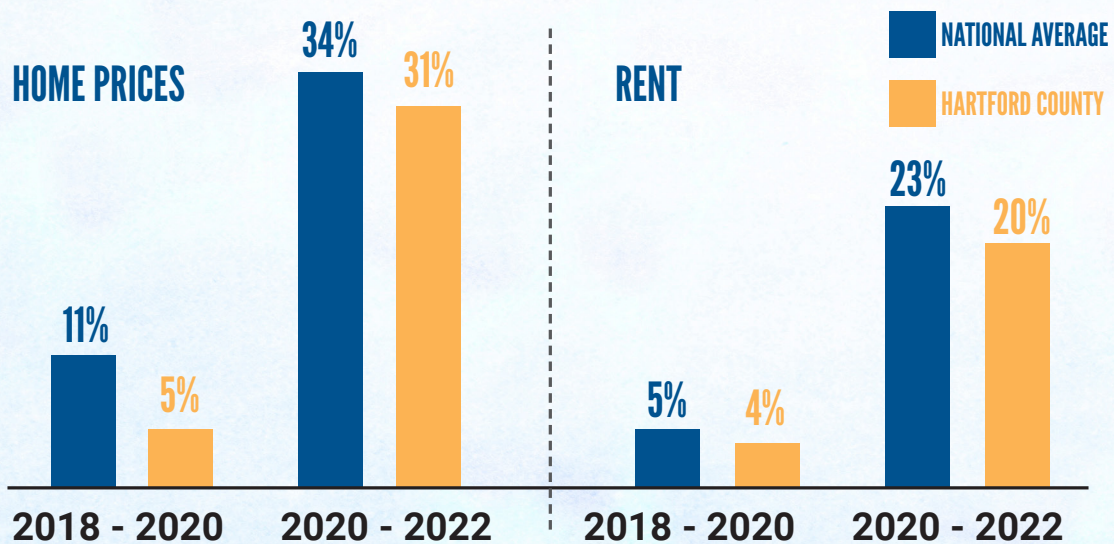
Limited housing options for low-income and minority residents limit their resources, including access to better education, safer neighborhoods and higher paying jobs.<sup>9</sup>

While Connecticut saw declining rates of homelessness every year between 2015 and 2021, that trend ended in 2022. According to one metric, the number of people experiencing homelessness increased 13 percent over the past year.<sup>10</sup> Between September and October 2023, there was an alarming 20 percent increase in elderly homelessness.



## HOUSING PRICES HAVE SURGED SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC <sup>8</sup>

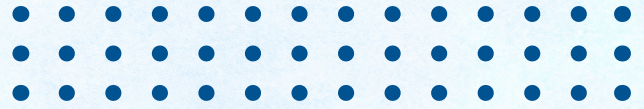
Percent change in average home prices and monthly rent, 2018–2022



<sup>8</sup> Greater Hartford Community Wellbeing Index 2023, DataHaven, [ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven\\_GH2023-web.pdf](https://ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven_GH2023-web.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Desmond, M., & Western, B., “Poverty in America: New Directions and Debates,” Annual Review of Sociology, 2018, [doi.org/10.1146/annurevsoc-060116-053411](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurevsoc-060116-053411)

<sup>10</sup> Advancing CT Together, 2022 HIC Point-in-Time report, [aids-ct.org/hic-pit-2022.html](https://aids-ct.org/hic-pit-2022.html)



In Connecticut, there is a mismatch between wages and the basic cost of living. While wages are increasing for the 20 most common occupations, they cannot keep pace with the inflation rate. The ALICE Essentials Index estimates an 18.2 percent increase statewide in basic costs from 2021 to 2023 (before taxes).<sup>11</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted job availability in Greater Hartford; however, the unemployment rate has remained low. And a wide wage gap still exists by sex and race/ethnicity, even within occupational groups.<sup>12</sup>

In 2021, 60 percent of the 20 most common occupations in Connecticut had hourly wages that paid below \$20.00. For a young family of four, a combined \$45.71 hourly wage is needed to afford the basics.<sup>13</sup>

A substantial number of workers at many of the 20 most common occupations live below the ALICE Threshold. Making progress on these issues involves more than a wage increase. Resolutions include an expanded state Earned Income Tax Credit, a permanent and fully refundable Child Tax Credit and free school meals.

Discrimination is another issue contributing to wage disparities. Despite labor force changes in Greater Hartford during the pandemic, persistent gender and racial wage gaps remained—particularly wage gaps by race—indicating discrimination as a key factor in regional disparities within educational and occupational groups.<sup>14</sup>

## TOP OCCUPATIONS, EMPLOYMENT, WAGES AND PERCENTAGE BELOW ALICE THRESHOLD, CONNECTICUT, 2021 <sup>11</sup>

OCCUPATION	TOTAL EMPLOYMENT (BLS)	MEDIAN HOURLY WAGE (BLS)	PERCENT MEDIAN WAGE CHANGE FROM 2019 (BLS)	PERCENT WORKERS BELOW ALICE THRESHOLD (ACS PUMS)
Retail Salespersons	41,520	\$14.16	6%	32%
Personal Care Aides	38,040	\$14.30	12%	58%
Cashiers	37,600	\$13.80	17%	43%
General and Operations Managers	36,620	\$59.68	-7%	10%
Registered Nurses	34,320	\$40.32	3%	11%

(BLS) Bureau of Labor Statistics

(ACS) American Community Survey

(PUMS) Public Use Microdata Sample

<sup>11</sup> ALICE in Connecticut: 2023, Connecticut United Ways

<sup>12</sup> Greater Hartford Community Wellbeing Index 2023, DataHaven, [ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven\\_GH2023-web.pdf](https://ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven_GH2023-web.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> ALICE in Connecticut: 2023, Connecticut United Ways

<sup>14</sup> Quillian, L., Pager, D., Hexel, O., & Midtbøen, A. H., "Meta-Analysis of Field Experiments Shows No Change in Racial Discrimination in Hiring over Time," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 2017, [pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.1706255114](https://pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.1706255114)

# THE ISSUES: LIFE EXPECTANCY AND HEALTH OUTCOMES

Ensuring everyone has access to health care and safe, healthy living environments is crucial to minimize health risks and reduce poor health outcomes in our communities.

The problem is many people do not feel they have the same opportunity to receive quality care due to cost, discrimination and lack of access to transportation.

### Cost

Health outcomes are often impacted by earnings. People and families put off preventative care for physical health—and those living below the ALICE Threshold report feeling more depressed and anxious.

### Discrimination

The 2023 DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey reports that women were more than twice as likely as men to report feeling discriminated against in health care settings, Black and Latino adults more than three times as likely as white adults and low-income adults five times as likely as higher income adults.<sup>15</sup>



### Life Expectancy

Poor health outcomes including mental health are prevalent for those below the ALICE Threshold in Connecticut. For example, in November 2022, 14 percent of respondents below the ALICE Threshold were more likely to report feeling down, depressed or hopeless more than two weeks per month compared to 5 percent of respondents above the Threshold.<sup>16</sup>

Communities with fewer resources—and those with lower access to basic needs and basic health care—are adversely and disproportionately affected by mortality. Cancer and heart disease top the causes of death in Connecticut and Greater Hartford, resulting in the highest loss of life-years.<sup>17</sup>

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2019, overall life expectancy in the United States was 78.8 years. By the end of 2021, it was 76.4 years.<sup>18</sup>

In 2019, the overall life expectancy in Hartford County was estimated at 80.5 years and overall expectancy in Connecticut was 81.1 years.

In Hartford County in 2019, life expectancy for white residents was 80.7 years, compared to 78.9 years for Black residents and 80.2 years for Latino residents.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Greater Hartford Community Wellbeing Index 2023, DataHaven, [ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven\\_GH2023-web.pdf](https://ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven_GH2023-web.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> ALICE in Connecticut: 2023, Connecticut United Ways

<sup>17</sup> Greater Hartford Community Wellbeing Index 2023, DataHaven, [ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven\\_GH2023-web.pdf](https://ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven_GH2023-web.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Xu, J.Q., Murphy, S.L., Kochanek, K.D., & Arias E, "Mortality in the United

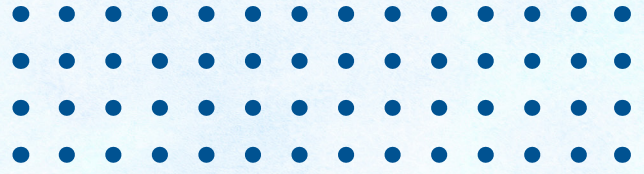
States, 2021," National Center for Health Statistics, 2022 [stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/122516](https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/122516)

<sup>19</sup> Greater Hartford Community Wellbeing Index 2023, DataHaven, [ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven\\_GH2023-web.pdf](https://ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven_GH2023-web.pdf)





# COMMUNITY FIRST



Transformation is a we effort—not something United Way can do alone. Forming a foundation based on the voices and experiences of those in our community is crucial when it comes to changing lives and strengthening our communities.

Our efforts to listen to and engage with our community included 41 Community Conversations in our region with 377 participants.

Listening to a range of diverse voices—spanning gender, generation, race and ethnicity—helps us learn from community members across every community we serve.

Through these conversations, we gained valuable insight into our community’s hopes for the future of our community. The voices we heard want their community to be more:

- Socially connected and civically engaged
- Thriving, growing and equitable
- Safe
- Diverse
- Unified
- Resourceful



Fundamentally, we know our region has the assets and strength—including resiliency, cultural diversity and motivated, engaged citizens—to help build stronger and better-connected communities.

## These conversations helped us identify the resolute system changes needed to improve outcomes and reduce disparities in our communities, including:

1. Enhancing awareness and access to social services
2. Reducing education disparities
3. Creating more affordable housing options
4. Improving poverty navigation services
5. Connecting people to living-wage jobs
6. Addressing economic disparities
7. Fostering community engagement and inclusiveness
8. Decreasing health outcome disparities
9. Enabling more service system collaboration
10. Ensuring access to mental health services is available
11. Removing support services barriers and stigma

By putting our community first, we now have actionable insights, emphasizing our commitment to deepen community impact, invest in our youth and work with communities to help recognize and reduce existing disparities in community education, health and economic outcomes.

# TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE

At United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut, we are co-creating a better future for our region.

In 2024, we will mobilize our nonprofit leaders, donors, stakeholders and residents to participate in design sessions to forge a bold path forward.

We are on a collaborative mission to Unite our region in closing gaps in child care, housing, workforce and life expectancy with the goal of ending all forms of poverty.

Together, we can create an equitable environment in central and northeastern Connecticut where everyone can succeed.

## Our approach involves:

- > **Aligning** community, corporate, government and philanthropic partners to end poverty
- > **Leveraging** data, community voice, resources, expertise and experience to deepen impact
- > **Connecting** people with resources and opportunities to make a difference
- > **Transforming** the future with game-changing solutions and partnerships

Through these efforts, we can revolutionize and strengthen our regional communities. With insight and awareness about our communities—their challenges, aspirations and vision—we can collaborate to make systematic change to improve them.



## JOIN US!

Join us. Strengthen our communities and bring the

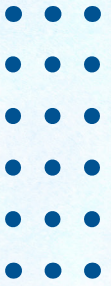


vision to life.

### Stay informed and join us by:

- > Signing up for our e-newsletter
- > Following @unitedwayinc on social media
- > Funding our mission at [unitedwayinc.org/donate](https://unitedwayinc.org/donate)
- > Contacting your United Way liaison

# THANK YOU TO OUR STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE



**Michael J. Auseré**  
Eversource

**Chester Paul Beach, Jr.**  
Community Volunteer

**Shellye Davis**  
Greater Hartford Labor  
Coalition AFL-CIO

**Tom Dorsey**  
Community Volunteer

**Maria Falvo**  
American Savings Foundation

**Michael Goldbas**  
Community Volunteer

**David Griggs**  
MetroHartford Alliance

**Beatriz Gutierrez**  
CONNSTEP, Inc.  
an affiliate of CBIA

**Humberto Hormaza**  
FOX61 & CW20, TEGNA

**Steven Litchfield**  
TD Bank

**Patricia McIntosh**  
City of Hartford

**Natalie Morris**  
RTX

**Jim O'Meara**  
Webster Bank

**Paul Pita**  
Creative Brand Strategist

**Stephanie Polzella**  
The Hartford

**Alondre Rush**  
HSB

**Sara-Beth Sidla**  
Lincoln Financial Group


**John A. Soos, Jr.**  
RTX

**Jan Turner**  
Travelers

## 1924 Society

The 1924 Legacy Society honors donors whose gifts support United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut through a will, trust, retirement plan or life insurance designation, or life-income gift such as a charitable gift annuity or remainder trust. If you have made a commitment to support the future of United Way, please let us know. We want to thank you, ensure that your wishes are met and welcome you to the 1924 Legacy Society.



 Learn More

### Interested in Learning More?

Scan the QR Code or contact  
Clayton Jason at  
[cjason@unitedwayinc.org](mailto:cjason@unitedwayinc.org)  
or 860.493.1106  
for more information.



# Congratulations to tonight's 2023 Community Service Award honorees:

**Greg and Mary-Jo Toczydlowski**

All of us at Travelers thank Greg and Mary-Jo  
for their leadership in our community.



[travelers.com/community](https://travelers.com/community)

The Travelers Indemnity Company and its property casualty affiliates. One Tower Square,  
Hartford, CT 06183

© 2024 The Travelers Indemnity Company. All rights reserved. Travelers and the Travelers  
Umbrella logo are registered trademarks of The Travelers Indemnity Company in the U.S.  
and other countries. M-18629 Rev. 3-24

# Recognizing remarkable dedication

HSB is privileged to be a part of United Way's Centennial Kickoff. We are excited to recognize Greg and Mary-Jo Toczydlowski with United Way's highest honor — the 2023 Community Service Award. Together, let's celebrate their unwavering commitment to making a difference in our communities.

– HSB & Greg Barats



A Munich Re company

**United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut is pleased to honor Greg and Mary-Jo Toczydlowski with its 2023 Community Service Award. The award is the most significant way United Way recognizes its volunteers.**



# PASSING THE GAVEL



Thank you **Vittoria Pace** for serving as Chair of United Way's Board of Directors from 2022-2024. We are grateful for your strong leadership and future-forward vision.



Welcome **Peter Collins** as the incoming Chair of United Way's Board of Directors. We are eager to partner with you as we co-create an equitable, successful community.

## DIVE DEEPER INTO THE DATA

United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut is proud to be a sponsor of the 2023 Connecticut United Ways ALICE Report and the 2023 DataHaven Greater Hartford Community Well-Being Index, both of which provided valuable insight that helped craft the Onward860>>> vision.



United Way is committed to investing in making data about community conditions available. Visit [unitedwayinc.org/publications](https://unitedwayinc.org/publications) to read the full reports.

# SAVE THE DATES!

JOIN US and help support United Way by attending an upcoming event.  
Visit [unitedwayinc.org/events](https://unitedwayinc.org/events) to learn more.



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH

APRIL



1924 YEARS 2024

CENTENNIAL KICKOFF

APRIL 3

THE Commercial Real Estate  
and Building Industry Breakfast



Presented By:  
TRAMMELL CROW RESIDENTIAL  
A CROW HOLDINGS COMPANY

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS

MAY 2



Presented by:  
KeyBank | Key4Women®  
Advocate | Connect | Empower

POWER OF THE PURSE

JUNE 6

DAY  
- OF -  
ACTION

UNITED WAY  
DAY OF ACTION

JUNE 21



FOX61 AND UNITED WAY  
IMPACT AWARDS

OCTOBER 25



1924 YEARS 2024

CENTENNIAL GALA

DECEMBER 14



UNITED WAY  
860CARES

ONGOING



@unitedwayinc

#Onward860

[unitedwayinc.org](https://unitedwayinc.org)



United Way of Central and  
Northeastern Connecticut