The incredible work detailed in this report is made possible by the tireless work of our dedicated staff and volunteers, as well as support from individual donors, foundations, government agencies and corporations.

Thank you — and please enjoy.

COMMUNITY IMPACT
Morgan Holmgren
Dahnesh Medora

Disaster Resilience
Cristy Muñoz
Jamila Wilson

Early Learning Multnomah County
Molly Day
Destiny Magana Pablo
Michelle Nelson
Lai-Lani Ovalles
Frances Sallah
Mina Smith

Early Learning Washington County
Alessandro Mastrorocco
Laura Ramirez Altamirano
Begoña Rodriguez Liern

Hands On Greater Portland
John Afryl
Todd Diskin
Laura Guape Anaya

Housing
Linda King
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Naomi Melendez
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Liz Thornton
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MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
Kate Greenstreet
Adrian McCarthy
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RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
Michelle House
Amanda Keppeler
Nicole LaRose
Susan Lehman Stevenson
Charles McGee
Guillermo Ramirez
Dave Rogers

PRESIDENT & CEO
Kelly O’Lague
While we continue to face the impacts of an ongoing pandemic and economic challenges, great things happened last year at United Way of the Columbia-Willamette. By focusing our funding and fundraising efforts on housing stability, disaster and crisis resiliency, early learning education and volunteerism, we were able to invest more than $9.5 million into our community.

Thanks to the support of our staff, volunteers, individual donors and corporate partners, we were also able to center racial equity and focus our funding on communities of color. We acknowledge that structural racism continues to contribute to inequities in our region and we still have tremendous work to do.

This past year, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette also underwent a strategic planning process and we will formalize our three-year strategic plan in the coming months.

Our fiscal year ended with very exciting news — we hired Kelly O’Lague as our new CEO. Kelly comes to us with years of experience and we are excited she has joined our team.

As we look ahead, we remain deeply committed to helping create a just and equitable region where all people can thrive. Thank you for standing united with us!

Sincerely,

[Signature]
I am honored to join the team at United Way of the Columbia-Willamette and I am excited to ground my roots in the Pacific Northwest. I recently relocated to Portland from the Bay Area and I am thrilled to bring visionary leadership to an organization that aligns with my core values, an organization that is focused on addressing and solving some of our community’s most challenging issues.

We continue to experience the aftermath of a worldwide pandemic. We know that the pandemic has caused tremendous hardships for the most vulnerable in our communities, and the United Way of the Columbia-Willamette, with more than a century of dedicated service to the Portland area, has been uniquely positioned to respond. We have been and will continue to be deeply committed to serving people from systematically excluded and underserved communities. We recognize that thriving communities begin with thriving families so we must bring about systemic change by identifying challenges and bringing together those who can provide real solutions — like housing stability, early education, disaster and crisis resiliency and volunteerism.

We know that structural racism contributes to persistent disparities in our communities, and this reality informs our work every day. At United Way of the Columbia-Willamette, we remain steadfast in our commitment to put racial equity at the center of our work. That, of course, means we might have to ask challenging questions and make tough decisions if it means it’s what’s best to serve communities of color. We are ready for this challenge, and we look forward to cultivating a shared commitment — among staff, volunteers, community partners and donors — to help build a thriving community for all. We are grateful you are part of that commitment.

In partnership,

Kelly O’Lague
President & CEO
We strive to lead with racial equity because we know racial inequities can be found in every system across the country — in education, housing, health, criminal justice and more. We also know that in other dimensions of identity — income, gender, sexuality, education, ability, age, etc. — we see compounded inequities tied to race.

United Way of the Columbia-Willamette's commitment to racial equity is an ongoing learning process. Putting racial equity at the center of our work means asking hard questions about whether what we've become comfortable doing is really what best serves children, families and communities of color. It means examining who makes decisions and how these are made. In the coming year, we will engage in activities such as continuing to refine our own internal policies and practices and building our understanding of individual, institutional and structural racism.

To advance racial equity, our programs recognize that "one size does not fit all" and that specific strategies are necessary. Through investments and partnerships, we place priority on culturally specific organizations* and through intentional community engagement. I would like to share a few examples of this work in action on the following page.

While we are proud of the different ways our programs and services connect to community needs, we need to continually challenge ourselves. Looking forward, we will deepen our commitment to racial equity by supporting people of color to be the decision-makers in the systems that influence their lives, acknowledge and account for past and current inequities and work towards more just and equitable outcomes.

Respectfully,

Dahnesh Medora
Chief Impact Officer

*Drawn from "Philanthropy and Communities of Color in Oregon: From Strategic Investments to Assessable Impacts Amidst Growing Racial and Ethnic Diversity" by the Coalition of Communities of Color.
**HOUSING STABILITY**

Working in coordination with the Oregon Law Center and the Portland Housing Bureau, our Housing Stability team has been managing a program providing free legal defense to tenants negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and facing eviction. Through the program, financial assistance is made available to resolve evictions and termination notice cases. Knowing that households of color generally experience evictions at twice the rate of others, our team brings a racial equity lens to its work in different ways such as partnering with culturally specific and culturally responsive organizations to mitigate the impact of housing instability.

*To date, more than $1 million has been committed to preserve housing and create stability by paying eviction costs including, rent arrears, court and attorney fees, utilities and other costs associated with preventing homelessness for over 165 households.*

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**EARLY EDUCATION**

Starting kindergarten is a big moment for children and families. Add in differences in language and culture, and the transition to kindergarten can be complicated. Our Early Learning Hubs in Multnomah and Washington counties partner with community-based organizations and school districts to support cultural and linguistic diversity while building strong and supportive connections between families and their school community.

*In 2021/2022, nearly 18,000 families participated in group activities, classes and workshops in multiple languages and received referrals to needed resources.*

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**DISASTER RESILIENCY**

Working class communities of color, rural and low-income communities are disproportionately impacted by disasters and climate change. In response to the 2020 Labor Day Fires that impacted many parts of Oregon, our Disaster Resilience team helped raise and allocate more than $700,000 and impacted 18,600 households. Building on this work, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette became a key partner with the Oregon Health Authority, Trauma Informed Oregon, and 19 community-based organizations across the state to collaboratively convene Oregon's first community of color-led Disaster Resilience Learning Network.

*The Disaster Resilience Learning Network was awarded over $400,000 by the state to “advance equitable disaster resilience through healing centered, culturally grounded collaborations and actions.”*

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**VOLUNTEERISM**

This year our Hands On Greater Portland team launched our first BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) Land Gathering series in different parts of our region. Through different interactive outdoor gatherings led by and for BIPOC community members, participants focused on connecting with our natural environment and each other.

*In total, Hands On Greater Portland made 5,802 volunteer connections for 14,505 volunteer hours last year.*
OUR VISION

A just and equitable region where all people can thrive.

OUR MISSION

We advance equity by mobilizing, responding, and investing with our community partners to improve and strengthen lives.
OUR VALUES

**EQUITY**
We intentionally choose to center racial equity in decision-making.

**COLLABORATION**
We recognize that systemic change requires centering the voices of those most impacted by building inclusive relationships.

**EMPATHY**
We commit to understanding the experiences, perspectives, and feelings of others before we act.

**COURAGE**
We take bold steps to affect systemic change.

**AGILITY**
We understand, adapt and respond quickly in an ever-evolving environment.
OUR

FOCUS AREAS

Housing instability is at an all-time high in our region. Evictions are soaring and many individuals and families are in need of transitional housing support. **We invest in eviction prevention assistance to keep people in their homes as well as transitional housing and programs that provide services to create long-term housing stability.**

DISASTER & CRISIS RESILIENCY

Through our wildfire and pandemic work over the last few years, nonprofit leaders shared with us that communities of color do not have the disaster and crisis support they need. **We invest in organizations and programs that focus on communities of color before, during and after a disaster or crisis.**

EARLY EDUCATION

Quality early learning experiences lead to long-term achievement but many children in our region do not have access to preschool – particularly low-income children of color who often start kindergarten behind their peers. **We invest in early education programs focused on children of color because data shows that they are most affected by the inequity in our education system.**

VOLUNTEERISM

Through our Hands On Greater Portland program, we connect thousands of volunteers to projects every year. **We invest in volunteerism because we believe doing good transforms our community and each of us individually.**
HOUSING STABILITY
With federal funds dwindling and eviction moratoria ending, our region is experiencing a spike in evictions and the trauma associated with the displacement. United Way of the Columbia-Willamette is dedicated to stepping in and ensuring our neighbors have their rights defended.

Last year, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette granted Oregon Law Center $200,000 to expand their capacity to provide legal help to families facing eviction. The grant allowed Oregon Law Center to recruit lawyers who reflect the communities they serve while also providing families of color access to multilingual eviction prevent support.

The support paved the way for Oregon Law Center, Portland Housing Bureau’s Rental Services Office, and Portland Community College’s CLEAR Clinic to launch the Eviction Legal Defense Program with $3 million provided by the Portland Housing Bureau. United Way of the Columbia-Willamette serves as an administrative hub and pays the costs to remedy evictions which may also include rent arrears for participants in the program. This collaboration serves those in our community receiving 30% to 60% of area median income, and many of the clients we have referred to the program are facing arrears of more than $6,000, the average eviction rate for Multnomah County. To date, we have helped prevent 165 households from becoming houseless through lawyer assistance and rent arrears. After years of pandemic disruption, the need for this support will only grow, and we look forward to expanding this important eviction prevention program alongside our partners.
United Way of the Columbia-Willamette's $1.2 million grant to Bybee Lakes Hope Center has helped the homeless reentry center double their capacity. The new wing of Bybee Lakes Hope Center opened last year, offering access to beds, showers, a well-stocked kitchen, pet care, gardens, playground and job assistance to those who need it most in our community. People who are experiencing homelessness have a diverse range of needs. Bybee Lakes Hope Center seeks to support this wide array of people needing a helping hand so they can stabilize and live up to their true potential. The trauma-informed, data-driven and person-centered support Bybee Lakes Hope Center offers is a necessity as our community recovers from the trauma of the pandemic.

Those seeking assistance at the newly remodeled facility must be referred by one of the organization's 80 partners, commit to being clean and sober and cannot be registered as a sex offender, since the facility offers help to children and families. Bybee Lakes Hope Center is now offering shelter for more than 318 people at one time and is working on a partnership with OHSU to provide medical services on site. The center melds compassion and accountability to provide services meant to help in rehabilitation and success.
DISASTER & CRISIS RESILIENCY

Photo by Kenji Schmizu
The 2020 wildfires in Oregon had huge impacts on small towns in mostly rural communities. Last year, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette funded 30 community-based organizations that served 97,600 families across the state to help them rebuild their lives as they slowly recovered from the damage and trauma the fires left them with. We co-designed a trust-based grant-making process for these organizations to help fund their rapid response team and better serve these communities. Click here to read the Wildfire Response & Recovery Report.

Time and time again we also heard that Oregon's communities of color do not have the support they need during crises such as fires. In response, we began work to identify and fill the gaps in culturally appropriate communications, evacuation, shelter and other systems intended to alert and protect the state's residents. Over 2021-2022, our team has conducted research which is detailed in our Inclusive Messaging Report that is critically important to communities of color during disaster and crises, and described in detail on page 15 of this Impact Report.
After the devastating fires, there was a need to help communities foster strong resilience and support. Thus, the Disaster Resiliency Learning Collaborative was launched with the help of the Oregon Health Authority and Trauma Informed Oregon. This seven-week, multi-language pilot program convened 15 community-based organizations and 28 community leaders of color to focus on healing from the 2020 wildfires and the ongoing threat of climate related disasters in our region. After the educational program had finished, organizations who participated in the program were eligible to apply for a grant, and United Way of the Columbia-Willamette was able to provide funds to 12 community-based organizations totaling $179,000 for projects to build resilience for communities of color most prone to climate-related disasters such as wildfires, heatwaves and floods. The program proved to be so successful that the Oregon Health Authority awarded United Way of the Columbia-Willamette and Trauma Informed Oregon $415,000 to continue the work of this important program.
A common theme that emerged during our wildfire work was that Oregon’s communities of color do not have the support they need during a disaster or crisis. Community-based organization leaders identified profound gaps in culturally and linguistically appropriate communications regarding evacuation, shelter and other information designed to alert and protect those affected by the wildfires. In conversations with community-based organizations, philanthropic partners and public sector representatives, we determined that inclusive disaster preparedness messaging, materials and resources for communities of color could help address urgent needs in Oregon. Different processes and protocols were reviewed and changes were determined to better assist communities of color in times of disaster to ensure that every person has an equal opportunity to navigate a disaster. Click here to read the Inclusive Messaging Report: Preparing Oregon’s Communities of Color for Disaster.
Enrolled more than 1,300 at-risk children in high-quality preschool programs

Nearly 18,000 families participated in activities, classes and workshops

Through our Early Learning Multnomah County and our Early Learning Washington County initiatives, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette is helping kids — from their earliest learning through their high school graduation — show up for school prepared, confident and ready to succeed — because we know that a child’s chance of succeeding in school is largely determined before they even set foot in one. All too often, families of color get lost in an educational system built on exclusion and inequities. That’s why our programs are made to help each child succeed in school from the first day of kindergarten through the last day of senior year. Read about some exciting components of this important work on the following page.
Early Learning Multnomah’s Parent Accountability Council highlights the contributions of diverse parents and amplifies their voice in education. This group of parents is empowered to hold their children’s education as paramount and to hold those responsible accountable for providing culturally specific and culturally relevant education. By bringing voices that have been historically silenced to the forefront, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette works to ensure every parent has a fair and equal chance to advocate for their children.

One cornerstone project of the Parent Accountability Council launched this year — Preschool for All — in Multnomah County, offering 687 free preschool slots to families that need it most. The Parents Accountability Council was key in the overwhelming passage of Measure 26-214, having worked diligently from the program’s inception to get this measure on the ballot and supported in our communities. The Parent Accountability Council has also ensured Preschool for All will serve a diversity of families in the best way it can.

Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) are vitally important to the educational development of youth in our creative, digital world. That’s why United Way of the Columbia-Willamette is dedicated to ramping up efforts to create a more STEAM-friendly ecosystem of educators, excited kids and resources for both to use. We recently began a first of its kind collaboration in Oregon to expand access to quality STEAM learning opportunities for children and youth, particularly those of communities of color in Washington County.

We’ve partnered with a variety of government organizations, nonprofits and foundations to increase the number of community mentors and educators and help them offer high quality STEAM education opportunities. This collaborative will build an infrastructure to better the learning environment and empower communities of color to lead and hold decision-making authority in the classroom and beyond. A total of nine educators participated in 2022, with the pool of candidates speaking Hmong, English, Arabic, Spanish, Farsi, French and Dutch. The multilingual pool of Early Learning STEAM Master Trainers and Community Trainers will continue to expand as the program grows and we create a new generation of talented STEAM teachers and engaged youth across Washington County.
VOLUNTEERISM
COMMUNITY IMPACT WEEK
POWERED BY HANDS ON GREATER PORTLAND

30 volunteer projects over five days in four counties

More than 600 people volunteered

For more than two decades, our Hands On Greater Portland team has hosted numerous volunteer projects during Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend known as the MLK Weekend of Service. This year, we decided the best way to honor MLK was to amplify the work of other nonprofits dedicated to his work and shift our signature volunteer event to the fall. We are proud to introduce Community Impact Week which took place October 4 to 8, 2022!

Community Impact Week was a week dedicated to volunteer service with more than 30 projects and more than 600 volunteers across four counties – Washington, Multnomah, Clackamas and Clark. Volunteer opportunities highlighted our work that supports the mission and values of United Way of the Columbia-Willamette: early education opportunities, disaster and crisis resiliency, stable housing and, of course, volunteerism.

In line with our mission of advancing racial equity, we intend to focus on increasing the number of our Community Impact Week volunteer projects each year to serve communities of color and support racial justice initiatives. Volunteering throughout the week is a great way for individuals, family, friends and corporate groups to get out and support your local community.
Each year, we provide funding to a variety of non-profits. We are honored to help these organizations carry out their missions and help our communities thrive.

211 Info
Adelante Mujeres
Affiliated Tribes of NW Indians
AntFarm Youth Services
APANO
BB Camp (B’nai B’rith Camp)
Better Together Central Oregon
Bonnie Lynne Pickens Lerner
Bridge-Pamoja
Bridging Cultures
Brown Hope
Burns Paiute Tribe
Casa de la Cultura Tlanese
Cascade Relief Team
Catholic Charities
Centro Cultural of Washington County
Centro de Servicios Para Campesinos
Centro Latino Americano
Children's Book Bank
Clackamas Long-Term Recovery Group

Clackamas Service Center Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
COFA Alliance National Network
Community Action
Council for the Homeless
Creative Financial Staffing, LLC
Dancing Hearts Consulting, LLC
DevNW
Doulas Latinas International
East County Rising Community Projects
El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center
Estacada Area Food Bank
Euvalcree
Families en Accion
Fires Igniting the Spirit
Great Spirit United Methodist Church
Hacienda Community Development Cooperation
Home Forward
Imagine Black
Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice
Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)
JoAnna Sendejo
KALOHC
Klamath Tribes
Latino Network
League of United Latin America Citizens (LULAC)
Living Islands Non-Profit
LoveOne
Mano A Mano
Metropolitan Family Service
Micronesian Islander Community
Multnomah County (DCHS)
Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest, Inc. (NARA)
Next Up, Bus Project Foundation
Nonprofit Law Northwest, LLC
North Northeast Business Association
Northwest Housing Alternatives
NOWIA Unete
NW Natural
OneApp
Oregon Coalition of African American Community Leaders
Oregon Food Bank
Oregon Law Center
Oregon Public Health Institute
Pacific University – Sabiduria Program
Peacekeeper Society
Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noreste (PCUN)
Portland Books to Prisoners
Portland Mental Health and Wellness
Potluck in the Park
Raíces de Bienestar
REAP, Inc.
Rogue Climate
Ronald McDonald House
Rural Organizing Project
S. Oregon Black Leaders, Activists and Community Coalition
Samoa Pacific Development Corporation
Schoolhouse Supplies
Somali American Council of Oregon
Start Raising Young African Lives
Team for Economic Action in Molalla
The Ebony Collective CDC
The Hearth—De La Raiz Program
The Peacekeeper Society
The Next Door, Inc.
The Rosewood Initiative
The Stronghold
Todos Juntos
Unete Center for Farmworker Advocacy
Unite Oregon
United Congolese Community Organization of Oregon
Utopia PDX
Washington County Central Services
Washington County HHS
That mental health is wholly intertwined with community health is a key understanding that traditional and reactionary efforts often miss. Our partnership with Raíces de Bienestar helps encourage preventative, holistic, liberating, destigmatized and culturally specific mental health care that is hard to find.

Founders Dr. Ruth Zúñiga and Bonnie Lerner separately came to similar conclusions on what was lacking in the mental health care field and began working together to form the nonprofit in 2020. Their vision seeks to involve the community in authentic ways, through the utilization of community health workers who've garnered trust and can collaborate as fellow community members as well as health professionals. This small non-profit has hit the ground running and is expanding their services rapidly in a time when mental health care is more necessary than ever. We're proud to be by their side and supporting them as they seek to redefine how communities can be healthier and thrive.
The Albina-Rockwood Promise Neighborhood Initiative (ARPNI) is a partnership of community-based organizations, residents, local schools, colleges and local and federal government agencies. We work together to deliver resources, serve communities and empower families. From the first days of learning to post-high school plans, the program supports students and families through culturally specific and culturally responsive services.

The student population is diverse, with many students identifying as having multiple or intersecting identities. Nearly 50% of students identify as Hispanic or Latino, and 13% of students identified more than one race or ethnicity. We use information from the survey to make positive changes, strengthening how we work together to improve the lives of students and families. ARPNI partners include Self Enhancement, Inc., Native American Youth and Family Center, Latino Network, Immigrant Refugee Community Organization, Metropolitan Family Service, Portland Public Schools, Reynolds School District and United Way of the Columbia-Willamette. Portland is one of 23 communities since 2010 to receive this special U.S. Department of Education grant.
Hunger is not an insoluble nor an isolated issue. This ethos drives the work of Clackamas Service Center, a non-profit based in Clackamas County providing community, food, hygiene and resilience to families and individuals seeking it. The 501(c)3 founded in 1973 has served as a vital community hub for low- and no-income Portlanders and is currently the largest food pantry in the county. They embody their core values in the work they do, providing trauma-informed care and centering the inherent dignity of those they walk alongside.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, demand for support soared. In response, Clackamas Service Center increased their food storage capacity by 800%, began offering home delivery in six relevant languages, drastically increased the poundage of food provided and more than doubled the number of families they serve. With support from United Way of the Columbia-Willamette, the group's new Food Hub officially opened in late 2021, offering them a new space to intake and store food donations. They are now moving over 70,000 pounds of food a month with the goal to take that number over 100,000 pounds. More than 4,000 families receive help from the group each month.

“We offer food to offset the costs of so many other important things people need.”

Debra Mason
Executive Director
Clackamas Service Center
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Pizza Blends
PNC Bank Oregon
Portland Housing Bureau
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The Randall Group
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United Way of the Columbia-Willamette
UPS Portland Hub
US Bank
WaFd Bank
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Wells Fargo
Williams WPC-I, Inc.
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ZoomInfo