2025-2026
SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT

UNITED WAY
Greater Houston

FRIENDS

When the path forward feels uncertain, our community shows up for each other. That sentiment is at the heart of everything United Way of Greater Houston does, and this year, it guided us toward bold new efforts that put our services in closer reach of those who need them most.

We know that helping our neighbors achieve lasting financial stability means meeting them where they are. That's what drives our mission. This past year, we launched the Integrated Client Journey self-service platform so our neighbors can access our network of partners and programs anywhere, anytime. We purchased our new Montgomery County Service Center in Conroe to serve more ALICE households. And we partnered with the Houston Food Bank to address growing needs.

Foundational to empowering our neighbors is strengthening the networks that serve them. Through Nonprofit Connection's Government Funding Initiative, made possible by a generous grant from Houston Endowment, we helped organizations build the capacity to pursue and secure new funding.

In uncertain times, kindness is the way forward. Thank you for proving that through your generosity, leadership, and commitment to our community.

Kindness is the way we show up, and united is the way we lead.

Amanda McMillian
President & CEO

Steve Stephens
Chair, Board of Trustees

UNITED IS THE WAY

Across our work, United Way of Greater Houston drives system-level change by convening partners, aligning data and investments, and coordinating an integrated network of services that help our region thrive.

14% of households across Greater Houston live below the federal poverty threshold, and another 26% are working hard but still can't afford the basic necessities of life.

That's why, together as a community, we do what no one organization can do alone: uniting volunteers, corporate partners, the public sector, and nonprofits to remove barriers to stability and help more than a million people land on their feet–and stay there.

To learn more, visit
smallwinsbigmoves.org

HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS LAND ON THEIR FEET–AND STAY THERE

The Integrated Client Journey (ICJ) is a personalized approach that brings together nearly 100 partners, programs, and services into one connected pathway, providing our neighbors a starting point in their journeys to financial stability.

In addition to accessing the ICJ with the help of a Navigator, neighbors can now embark on their own journey through our new self-service platform, where small wins add up to big moves. Users can set goals, find local resources, and chart their own course to financial stability–all from their cell phone or computer, and all on their own schedule.

By the Numbers

25 navigation teams across 12 priority regions in our four-county service area.

100+ resources and partners accessible through the self-service platform.

8,541 client goals set between Navigation and Self-Service, including increasing savings, completing job training, achieving homeownership, and more.

Client Accomplishments

41% average increase in household income after one year of Navigation.

11.2% average increase in self-sufficiency and well-being after one year.

> "I didn't even know how I was going to make it. Now I've completed the Navigation program and I'm pursuing my associate's degree."
>
> – Nyfescia

211: THE FIRST CALL FOR HELP AND HOPE

When our neighbors need help and don't know where to start, the 211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE offers free, 24/7 connections to life-changing community resources in more than 350 languages. In 2025, 211 made more than 1.2 million connections to help and hope.

A Real-Time Community Barometer

211 does more than connect neighbors to help: it generates valuable real-time data that local leaders can use to refine strategies based on demand for services, programmatic changes, and policy timing. In February 2026, we launched three new dashboards–Disaster Data, Food Insecurity, and Congressional Data–giving leaders more targeted insights into the needs impacting our region.

211 Day Community Briefing

On February 11 (2/11), we hosted community leaders and policymakers for our 211 Day Community Briefing. Guests explored 2025 community data and our new dashboards, heard an inspiring appeal from City Councilwoman Twila Carter, and experienced a live tour of our 211 call center in action.

Explore 211 Data

Top Caller Needs in 2025

20.7% Utility Assistance Programs

16.3% Rent/Mortgage Assistance

9.9% Food Programs/ Services

8.6% Housing Services

6.4% Medical Care

SUPPORTING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

When children have access to quality early learning, families are better able to work, grow their careers, and build lasting financial stability–and children are more likely to thrive in school and beyond.

Through Bright Beginnings, our long-standing partnership with ExxonMobil, we provide high-quality early education to approximately 1,000 children each year across 29 licensed programs, with alumni consistently outperforming peers on state achievement tests.

Through Early REACH, a partnership of Harris County, BakerRipley, and United Way of Greater Houston, we served more than 1,200 children across 28 centers, delivering 950+ coaching sessions and achieving a 95% director retention rate. We also partnered with Workforce Solutions to launch a home-based child care provider program, extending professional development and coaching to an underserved yet essential part of our early learning network.

69% of Bright Beginnings programs are NAEYC-accredited, far exceeding regional averages.

EXPANDING OUR REACH IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

After 10 years of service and partnership in Montgomery County–reaching more than 500,000 individuals–we are making a strategic move that will help us serve even more of our neighbors when and how they need us most. Guided by ALICE data, we're relocating our service center from The Woodlands to a new 51,900-square-foot facility in Conroe. The new center brings more nonprofit partners together under one roof, connected through our Integrated Client Journey, and will serve as a true community asset for years to come.

"This new building improves our ability to meet people where they are with an expanded hub of nonprofit partners that makes accessing support simpler, faster, and more efficient for those we serve."

– Amanda McMillian, President & CEO

STRENGTHENING OUR NONPROFIT COMMUNITY

As nonprofits navigate a rapidly changing funding landscape, the Government Funding Initiative, made possible by a generous $4 million grant from Houston Endowment, is helping organizations build the skills and systems they need to successfully compete for and manage public funding. The initiative's first phase drew more than 2,500 registrants and awarded $10,000 capacity-building micro-grants to 22 participating organizations. To date, participants have already secured more than $1.4 million in grant funding.

BUILDING REGIONAL DISASTER READINESS

The Greater Houston Disaster Alliance strengthened disaster system readiness by formalizing coordination with 18 core nonprofit partners, reducing response timelines to as few as seven days and engaging more than 150 staff across 70+ organizations to build regional capacity and resilience. This year's emphasis on our data strategy has resulted in the identification of 29 highly vulnerable zip codes, including 10 disaster service deserts, and the strategic alignment of $1.47 million in new funding to scale system-wide solutions.

ROBERT W. KNEEBONE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR, CHAIRMAN'S AWARD, AND YOUNG LEADER OF THE YEAR WINNERS

Robert W. Kneebone Volunteer of the Year

Willie Chiang
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Plains All American

Over 11 years of board service, Willie Chiang has given United Way of Greater Houston some of its most vital leadership, including two years as Board Chair during a period of significant organizational growth, followed by his current role leading the Board Governance and Nominations Committee. A member of the Building Possibilities Campaign Committee, Willie's commitment has shaped both the present and future of our United Way.

Chairman's Award

Sarah Trend
Unconventional Technical Manager, ExxonMobil

Sarah Trend's commitment to United Way runs both deep and broad. As Co-Chair of the Alexis de Tocqueville Society and Internal ADT Chair at ExxonMobil, a member of our Montgomery County Council and Women's Initiative Committee, and Chair of Women Who Rock, she has provided exceptional leadership across nearly every facet of our work.

Young Leader of the Year

Christine Maher
Engineering Supervisor, ExxonMobil

A widely respected member of the Young Leaders Council, Christine is one of the most visible and effective advocates of the mission of United Way of Greater Houston at ExxonMobil. She is a member of Women's Initiative and has served on the Young Leaders' Communications Committee. Christine's commitment to uplifting and empowering others demonstrates the spirit of the Young Leaders community.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Rappel for a Reason

We brought Rappel for a Reason back for a fourth year to show Greater Houston what we can achieve when we go above, beyond, and over the edge for our community. A special highlight: Amegy Bank founder Walter Johnson celebrated his 90th birthday by rappelling 26 stories to support his neighbors.

Special thanks to our incredible sponsors PNC, Boardwalk Pipelines, Burns McDonnell, Hackett Family Foundation, Houston Chronicle, DoubleTree by Hilton, Truluck's, Amegy Bank, Frost Bank, UTHealth Houston, Service Corporation International, Transwestern, Williams, and Valero for making this event possible.

Executive Briefing With Diane Yentel

As nonprofits across the country faced an uncertain funding landscape, United Way brought a guiding voice to Greater Houston. More than 120 nonprofit, foundation, corporate, and public-sector leaders gathered for a special briefing with Diane Yentel, President of the National Council of Nonprofits–the sector's leading advocate and primary source of guidance during a challenging 2025–for a candid conversation with United Way of Greater Houston President & CEO Amanda McMillian.

A RECORD-BREAKING WOMEN WHO ROCK

More than 1,000 passionate supporters came together for the biggest Women Who Rock luncheon ever, united by a shared belief in lifting one another and strengthening our community. Featuring an energizing keynote by Melissa Radke, this year's celebration raised critical funds for the Women Who Rock Child Care Scholarship, helping hard-working parents continue their education and build brighter futures for their families.

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