



# 2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

LIVE UNITED



United Way  
of Whatcom County





## OUR MISSION

To Unite with a network of local businesses, nonprofits, and community stakeholders to enable financial stability for every person in Whatcom County.

## OUR VISION

Fostering communities where all families and individuals have opportunity to thrive.

## OUR VALUES

Community | Trust/Integrity/Responsibility | Teamwork | Gratitude | Compassion

## BUILDING EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES

We recognize that structural racism and other forms of oppression have contributed to persistent disparities which United Way seeks to dismantle. Our United Way network strives to engage community members, especially those whose voices have traditionally been marginalized. We work with individuals, nonprofits, public and private partners to find and support solutions to ensure everyone has the resources, opportunities and networks they need to thrive.

At United Way of Whatcom County, we oppose all forms of racism and discrimination and commit to leveraging our assets (convening, strategic investments, awareness building, and advocacy) to create more equitable communities.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**John Ayre** | Bellingham Bells Baseball Club, Assistant General Manager

**Tony Bon** | Community Volunteer

**Natalie Boatman** | WECU, Indirect Dealer Representative

**Patricia Boteler** | Samson Rope Technologies | Talent and Engagement Manager

**Lindsey Cerise** | bp Cherry Point Refinery, Strategy & Portfolio Manager

**Adrianne Czebator** | Peoples Bank, Data Analytics Manager

**Heather Dyer** | bswift, Market Insight UX Researcher

**Kara Irvin** | US Bank, VP/Business Banking Sales Manager

**Jeremy Jordan** | Samson Rope Technologies, Chief Financial Officer

**Jason Sears** | Community Volunteer



# A LETTER FROM THE TEAM

Dear donors, sponsors, advocates, volunteers, and friends,

The past few years have been incredibly difficult for our community. As we move out of the chaos of the pandemic, it's clear that many people are still desperately in need of critical services, resources, and, most importantly, hope.

With such great need in our community, it can be overwhelming to think about the complex issues we are up against. We may even find ourselves wondering if we as individuals can make a significant impact. Thankfully, we're in this together. And the answer is a resounding yes!

When we all give a little, we can make big things happen. Our collective generosity makes a tangible difference in the lives of over 50,000 people in our community every single year. But these aren't just numbers. They're our friends and neighbors. And they are on a better path because of you.

Thank you for joining us in this work. Thank you for believing that together, we can make a difference. Thank you for Living United.

*From all of us at United Way*

*United Way Board and Staff*





# THANK YOU TO OUR 2022-23 COMMUNITY BUILDER SPONSORS!



Peoples Bank



Ferndale Refinery

# THANK YOU TO OUR 2022-23 DOLLY PARTON IMAGINATION LIBRARY SPONSORS!



Ferndale  
Refinery

*Scott Ham and Christina Dodd*



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE LOCALLY

*"I support the United Way Community Impact Fund because it strengthens our communities in reading advocacy, as well as other critical areas of need such as homelessness, food insecurity, help for those with physical and mental disabilities, and so much more."*

***Lisa Lindsey, Phillips 66***

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*"I have been giving to United Way of Whatcom County since 2015 because I know they are going to make the best use of every donation, down to the very last penny! There are so many incredible and deserving nonprofits in Whatcom County doing amazing work and I feel good knowing that my donation is making the biggest impact possible! United Way takes the guesswork out of donating and makes it easy for me to support the community I love."*

***Meagan Southworth, WECU***

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*"Sometimes I'm overwhelmed by the need in our community. The state of housing, economic uncertainty, food insecurity, healthcare challenges -- I'll think we're at a breaking point, that there's no way we can solve the inequity. But then I remember all the amazing work that non-profit organizations in Whatcom County are accomplishing every day. Perhaps not every problem can be fixed, but there ARE people trying to help, and there ARE organizations driven to create positive change for overburdened individuals and families who need assistance the most."*

*By donating to United Way of Whatcom County, I'm able to help fund these efforts knowing my money is responsibly managed and distributed to have the greatest impact. As both my agency's campaign coordinator, and as a donor for twenty-four years, I'm proud to be a part of United Way of Whatcom County!"*

***Melissa Fanucci, Whatcom Council of Governments***

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# THE LATEST ALICE REPORT

## *Alice in the Crosscurrents*

In April of 2023, United for ALICE published the latest ALICE report. The ALICE report provides critical data that gives us a snapshot of financial hardship on a national, state, and local level. Outdated metrics like the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are extremely low and fail to give an accurate picture of what it really takes to get by in a given community. With the ALICE report data, United Way can drill down and see the true cost of living in Whatcom County and better understand the need in our community.

ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, and represents those who make more than the FPL but still can't afford the basics. According to the most recent ALICE report, 39% of Whatcom County households struggle to make ends meet, with single mothers and households of color overrepresented among those who struggle to get by.

There are many reasons why someone may struggle financially, including:

- Rising cost of living
- Stagnant wages
- Child care expenses
- Lack of opportunities for people with a disability
- Inflation, particularly for ALICE household essentials (Fig 2)
- Language barriers
- Unsafe living conditions

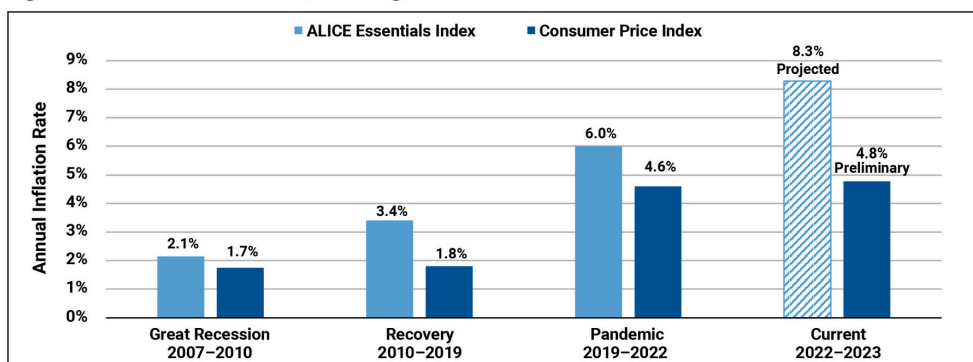
All these factors, and others, can complicate an individual or family's financial situation and make it much more difficult for them to achieve stability.

This data is crucial in helping us understand the needs of our community and respond accordingly. With this knowledge, we are better able to make informed decisions about where dollars will do the most good. United Way is proud to help fund United for ALICE research and share this important information throughout our community. The more we know, the more we can do to make change happen, United.

For more information on ALICE in Whatcom County, visit [unitedforalice.org/county-report/washington](https://unitedforalice.org/county-report/washington) and select Whatcom in the dropdown menu. For more information about our work to help ALICE families locally, visit [www.unitedwaywhatcom.org](https://www.unitedwaywhatcom.org).



**Figure 2. Annual Inflation Rate, Washington ALICE Essentials Index vs. National CPI, 2007–2023**





## COMMUNITY IMPACT

Every year, United Way of Whatcom County partners with local nonprofits that empower individuals and families to achieve financial stability. United, these agencies form a web; a community safety net to help catch those who might otherwise fall through the cracks.

Our network provides both short-term and long-term resources to help individuals and families in our community find a path out of their current situation into a place of stability and sustainability.

But our work doesn't end there. In addition to providing grant funding for a network of nonprofits serving our community, United Way of Whatcom County:

- Funds and manages Dolly Parton's Imagination Library for all of Whatcom County, providing books to local children under 5 at no cost to families.
- Leverages our support to help local nonprofits obtain matching funds for specific programs.
- Partners with federal, state, and local entities to bring in and distribute additional dollars to critical programs in Whatcom County.
- Provides no-cost prescription drug discounts through SingleCare, helping individuals and families save on prescriptions and use hard-earned dollars elsewhere.
- Funds United for ALICE research, helping provide critical data on financial instability at the local level.

**\$700,000 +**

*in grants to United Way partner agencies*

**\$45,000 +**

*in funding for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library*

**\$150,000 +**

*in funding for child care and early learning programs*

**\$10,000**

*in funding for United for ALICE research*



## CHILD CARE UPDATE

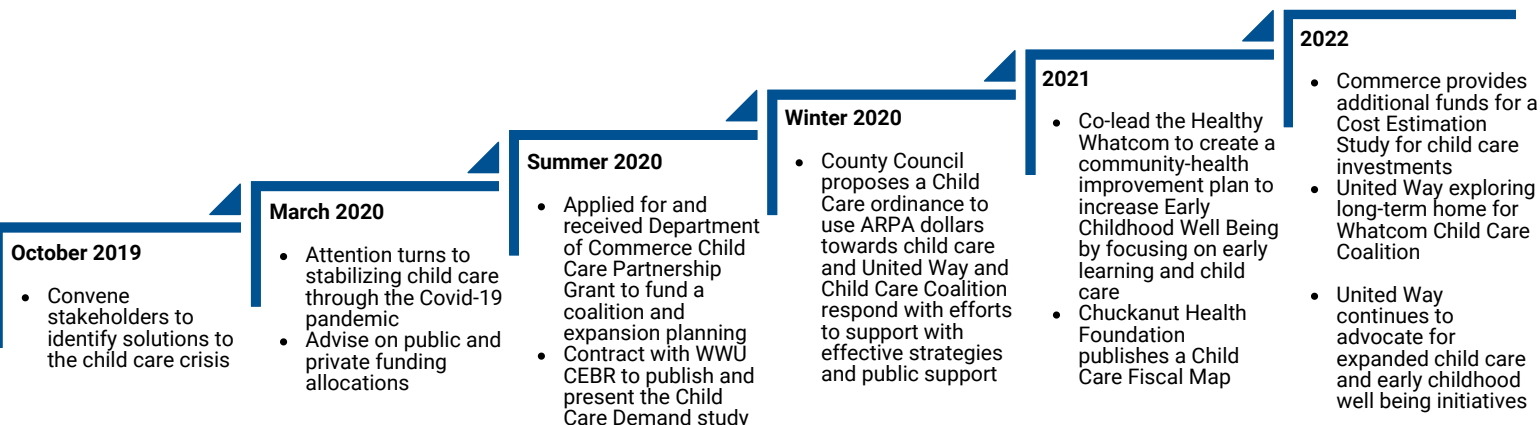
### United Way of Whatcom County's impact on Child Care in our community

*The United Way Child Care Initiative kicked off in 2019. Since that time, the child care landscape in Whatcom County has seen significant changes and developments. This is in part due to the catalyzing work of United Way's effort to convene stakeholders in 2019, and in part due to the detrimental impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on families and children, at which point child care was catapulted into the public eye.*

In 2019, United Way made a strategic decision to focus on the economic instability of families stemming from, in part, the child care shortage that keeps parents and caregivers from accessing secure and well-paying employment. The United Way Child Care Initiative focused on 4 key areas of work:

- Convening child care stakeholders to work together to stabilize and expand child care,
- Conducting and compiling research to inform effective and efficient stabilization and expansion of child care,
- Creating a child care plan that identifies and elevates strategies that will develop a robust, community-centered child care landscape that meets the need of families and providers,
- Garnering support to fund the implementation of the child care stabilization and expansion plan.

Since laying out these key areas of work, several significant steps have been taken to improve access to effective, high-quality child care for Whatcom County families. This progress would not have been possible without the collaboration of stakeholders, community support, and donors like you, whose generosity help United Way of Whatcom County fund several local nonprofit agencies that provide free and sliding scale options for families in need. Thank you for your continued support in helping us make Whatcom County a better place for all!



# OUR PROCESS

United Way of Whatcom County is proud to be an organization funded by the community, for the community. 100% of dollars donated to our Community Impact Fund stay local, helping to fund critical services right here in Whatcom County. How it works:

## 1. Raise

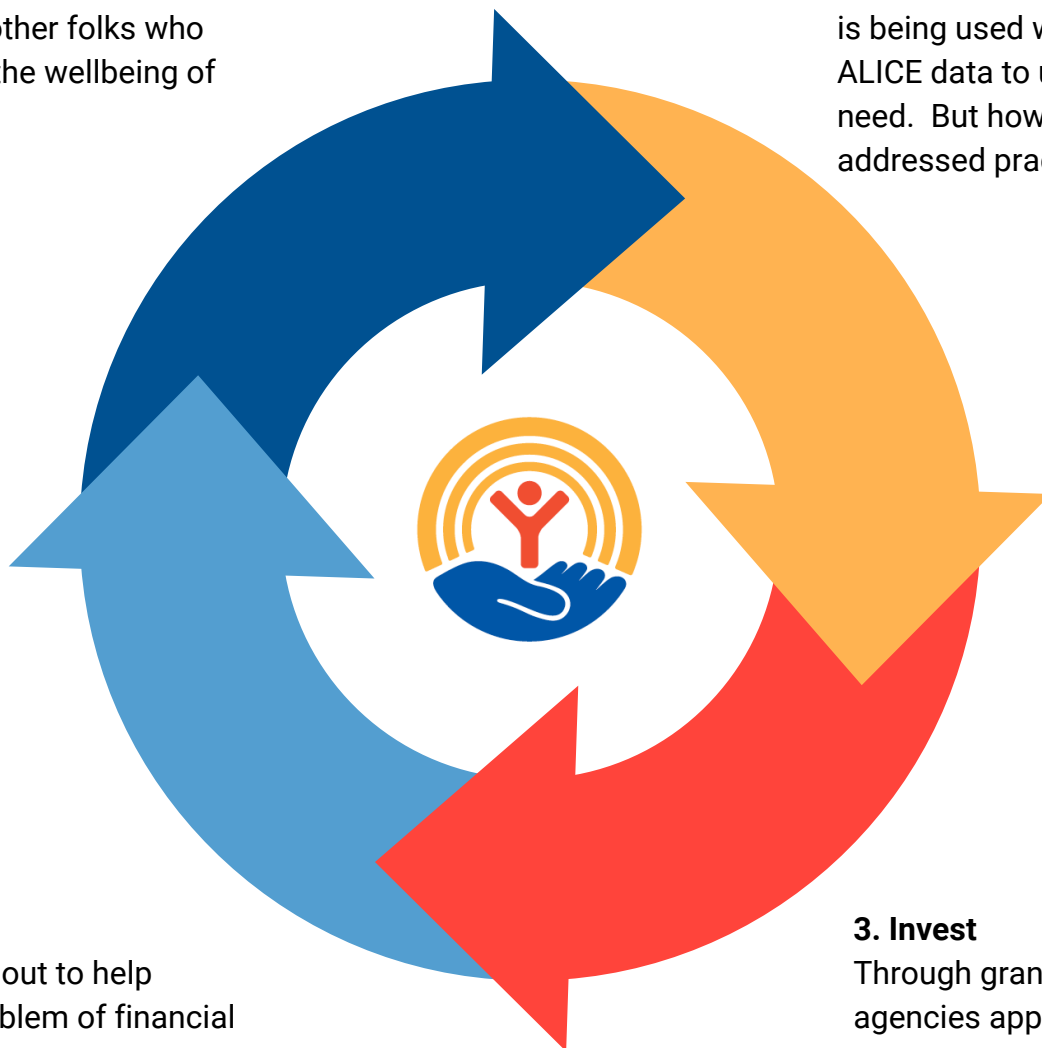
Each year, United Way raises hundreds of thousands of dollars through the generous contributions of donors, sponsors, and other folks who are invested in the wellbeing of our community.

## 2. Research

Once we have the money, where does it go? United Way is dedicated to stewarding funds well to make sure that the money is being used wisely. We use local ALICE data to understand the need. But how does that need get addressed practically?

*What happens once the money goes out?*

*We do it all again!*



## 4. Evaluate

Grants are sent out to help address the problem of financial instability holistically, helping fund a collaborative network of nonprofits.

Funded partners provide updates throughout their grant cycle, helping ensure that your dollars are being used wisely.

## 3. Invest

Through grants! Local nonprofit agencies apply for grant funding to help them serve our community. United Way convenes a panel of community members to review grant applications, examine the needs in our community, and help us decide where and how to invest the dollars.



# OUR IMPACT AREAS

In order to meet the needs of our community holistically, our team looks to fund local nonprofit agencies that work in one of three impact areas:

## Meeting Basic Needs

- Combatting food insecurity
- Providing stable, attainable, affordable housing
- Access to mental health care

## Improving Economic Mobility

- Financial literacy and training
- Vocational readiness training and support
- Adult education programs

## Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

- Affordable child care and early-learning programs
- Academic programs to increase student attendance and achievement
- Parenting support
- Addiction treatment and recovery
- Abuse prevention



**When folks have what they need, our whole community benefits. United Way of Whatcom County's unique approach provides a holistic solution to financial stability, helping individuals and families not only get back on their feet, but stay there.**

# YOUR DOLLARS IN ACTION

Here are just some of the things that generously donated dollars provide to help our struggling friends and neighbors:



Safe housing



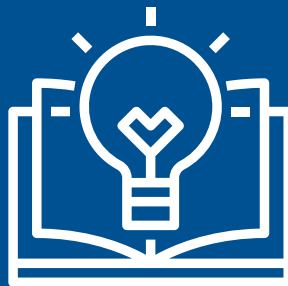
Affordable meals



Mental health services



Job training



Adult education programs



Financial literacy



Parenting support



Counseling programs



Academic achievement programs



# DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY: EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY

In March of 2022, United Way of Whatcom County launched Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, a low-barrier literacy program that mails enrolled local children under 5 one age-appropriate book monthly, regardless of their family's income. Our team jumped at the opportunity to run and fund this program, and our community responded with incredible enthusiasm.

It's been over one year since bringing the Imagination Library to Whatcom County. In that time, this program has exploded throughout our community.

We are thrilled at the impact this program has had and so proud to continue to provide this program to Whatcom County kids.



**BOOKS MAILED**  
**45,000+**



**KIDS SERVED**  
**4,000+**

# SINGLECARE: PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISCOUNT PROGRAM

We understand that many barriers exist for individuals and families struggling financially. One hurdle that can keep many families from becoming stable is access to affordable medication.

Our United Way is proud to provide SingleCare right here in Whatcom County, a free prescription savings card that gives discounts on everyday prescriptions.



**SingleCare®**

**\$168,906**

**saved in our community  
in the 2022-2023 fiscal year**

**\$1,900,000+**

**saved since the introduction of this  
program in Whatcom County**

# FUNDING A NETWORK OF NONPROFITS

## 2022-23 Funded Nonprofit Partners



**This year, United Way of Whatcom County invested over \$700,000 in grant funding in 22 local nonprofits helping struggling individuals and families achieve financial stability! We couldn't have done it without the generous support of our sponsors, donors, supporting workplaces, and community advocates. Thank you to all who have supported our work this year.**

**Lives are changed because of you.**



# COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANTS

Partner Agency	FY 2022/2023 Grants
Bellingham Child Care & Learning Center	\$ 40,000
Bellingham Food Bank	\$ 35,000
Bellingham Public Schools Foundation	\$ 25,000
Brigid Collins Family Support Center	\$ 50,000
Compass Health	\$ 10,000
Communities in Schools	\$ 20,000
Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services	\$ 25,000
Evergreen Goodwill	\$ 35,000
FuturesNW	\$ 25,000
Interfaith Coalition	\$ 24,000
Lydia Place	\$ 40,000
Max Higbee Center	\$ 25,000
Mercy Housing Northwest	\$ 25,000
Northwest Youth Services	\$ 34,500
Opportunity Council	\$ 63,000
Sun Community Services	\$ 31,000
The Arc of Whatcom County	\$ 12,000
Whatcom Center for Early Learning	\$ 44,313
Whatcom Council on Aging	\$ 35,000
Whatcom Family YMCA	\$ 50,000
Whatcom Literacy Council	\$ 27,000
Work Opportunities	\$ 25,000

## \$700,813



**United Way  
of Whatcom County**

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**GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.**

# **LIVE UNITED.**



# **THANK YOU!**