

**For 95 years, United Way of Southeast Louisiana has been on the front lines of community problems, both everyday problems and crises, across our seven-parish service area.**

In times of disaster, United Way supports households in need, puts out accurate information, and leads long-term recovery. We have a unique pulse on people's needs. That's why nonprofit partners and government officials have turned to United Way for our experience, network, and capacity as local communities struggle with COVID-19.

**Mission:** to eradicate poverty in Southeast Louisiana

**Vision:** equitable communities where all individuals are healthy, educated, and economically stable

Our investments are targeted to eradicate poverty by stabilizing the 47% of households living under the [ALICE® \(Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed\)](#) threshold who are unable to save for an emergency and struggle to afford even their most basic needs, including housing, food, transportation, child care, and health care.

With health risks, businesses and schools shuttered, and unemployment spiking, it's harder than ever before for people to meet basic needs. We also know that inequities existed before this pandemic, and those gaps in access to resources have been magnified by disproportionate and disparate effects of COVID-19 on some parts of our community. United Way of Southeast Louisiana is uniquely well-positioned to understand and lead community mobilization thanks to our Blueprint for Prosperity.

# COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY



## OUR PLAN: BLUEPRINT FOR PROSPERITY

We created our **Blueprint for Prosperity** over five years ago to outline our plan to move people out of poverty in our region. It utilizes a collective impact model to drive our investments in programs, collaborations, advocacy, and volunteerism to create positive outcomes at both the individual and systems level.

To propel our bold vision forward, the Blueprint leverages existing programs and partnerships established with over 100 organizations across our service area to create personal wellness, vibrant communities, stability today, and prosperity tomorrow.

**Our Blueprint's holistic approach to generating impact continues to guide us today as we lead immediate COVID-19 relief efforts and shift toward long-term recovery strategies designed to stabilize ALICE households throughout our region.**

The Blueprint employs the four Is as strategies to outline our holistic approach to addressing both the symptoms of poverty and creating pathways to prosperity.

**INVEST** in programs focused on poverty

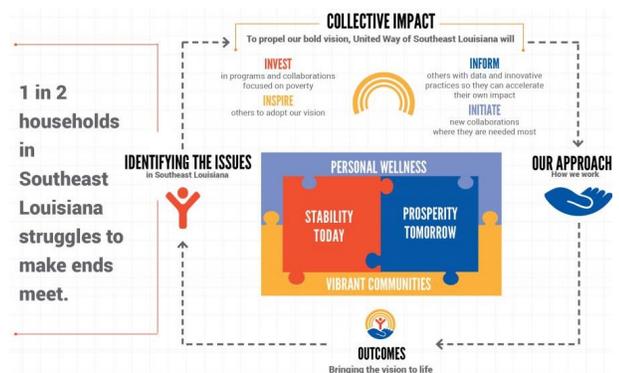
**INSPIRE** others to adopt our vision

**INFORM** others with data and innovative practices so they can accelerate their own impact

**INITIATE** new collaborations where they are needed most

In times of crisis, it's not just about providing emergency financial assistance but about ensuring households and community partners have equitable access to the full scope of supports necessary to achieve stability, and, ultimately, prosperity.

United Way is already on the front lines, mobilizing to provide vital services for those in need. United Way is doing what we've always done – tackling the underlying problems community by community.



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## IMMEDIATE RESPONSE - First 90 Days

We are uniquely well-positioned to understand and lead immediate community mobilization. We've been responding to society's most pressing problems for more than 95 years, and we're up for the challenges of COVID-19.

### 1) INVEST

- a. Reaffirmed our commitment to funding our 62 partner agencies and their programs supporting individuals living under the ALICE threshold
- b. Contributed \$100,000 to the Greater New Orleans Foundation Disaster Response and Restoration Fund to provide an immediate infusion of funding to struggling nonprofits
- c. Secured \$1.3 million in Emergency Food and Shelter grants to aid local nonprofits and government agencies providing emergency support to vulnerable households
- d. Invested \$1.2 million in nonprofits to address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the African American community in Orleans Parish
- e. Provided logistical support to seven nonprofit partners through SNAP Employment and Training reimbursement contracts

### 2) INSPIRE

- a. Continued local, state, and federal advocacy to enact bipartisan legislation and policy to stabilize ALICE households and charitable organizations
- b. Held virtual events and meetings to engage donor networks and recruit new members
- c. Worked to support corporate and community partners, with a focus on MBE/DBE certified businesses, to drive focus on equity

### 3) INFORM

- a. Helped launch a statewide survey of the state's 988 Type III ECE centers as a leading member of Ready Louisiana coalition to better understand their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and their current needs and concerns
- b. Spearheaded a statewide survey in partnership with the Louisiana Association of United Ways to understand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on ALICE households

# COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY

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- c. Surveyed our 62 partner agencies to gather information on their viability and short- and long-term needs
- d. Launched a partnership with GNO, Inc. to fund a study to measure the digital literacy of workers in industries hard-hit by COVID-19
- e. Deployed information, resources, and custom support tools to corporate and community partners, donors, advocates, and volunteers to elevate stakeholder knowledge

## 4) INITIATE

- a. Launched a pilot program, United for Early Care and Education, in partnership with Agenda for Children and Loyola University New Orleans College of Law, with \$100,000 in seed funding to provide legal and technical assistance to child care providers at risk of closing permanently due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- b. Launched the Hospitality Cares Pandemic Response Fund in partnership with Louisiana Hospitality Foundation to support over 4,750 hospitality industry families with one-time \$500 emergency grants to cover basic needs
- c. Partnered with J. M. Smuckers Company and Folgers® to provide over 2,000 meals to EMS workers across our service area
- d. Recruited thousands of volunteers through the new United Way HandsOn Entergy Volunteer Center, which, to date, has generated over \$2 million in direct impact
- e. Led Ready Louisiana's effort to join with early care and education providers and advocates for a statewide ECE virtual day of action to raise awareness around the crumbling child care industry in Louisiana
- f. Partnered with the Greater New Orleans Funders Network on a national webinar and toolkit on Centering Equity in Disaster Recovery

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## LONG-TERM RECOVERY - 4 to 12 months

The needs surrounding COVID-19's effects are great and not expected to diminish anytime soon.

Our goal is that we are able to not only provide immediate relief to stabilize ALICE households but also provide the support and services they need to achieve a full recovery.

### 1) INVEST

- a. Maintain support of our agency partners as they provide direct services to ALICE households in the core areas of health, education, and financial stability
- b. Meet fundraising goals to provide second-year funding to 62 partner agencies
- c. Engage volunteers in projects focused on creating vibrant communities throughout Southeast Louisiana with a focus on underserved communities
- d. Grow SNAP Employment and Training contracts to draw down additional dollars to support nonprofit partners
- e. Secure additional funding to maintain/grow financial capability programming including IDA, FAME virtual series, mortgage support, and VITA
- f. Develop programming to provide access to mental health support for vulnerable populations across seven-parish region
- g. Adapt the Kay Fennelly Summer Literacy Institute to provide services needed to support summer learning among social distancing and expand its presence beyond its summer program partners to reach children and families at home while prioritizing access and inclusion
- h. Organize partners and provide collaborative support, tools, and resources needed among advocates, educators, and parents through the New Orleans Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
- i. Invest an additional \$550,000 in nonprofits to address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the African American community in Orleans Parish

### 2) INSPIRE

- a. Grow grassroots and grassroots advocacy for bipartisan legislation and policy to drive local, state, and federal support to stabilize ALICE households and charitable organizations and build more equitable communities
- b. Assess and align corporate partnerships, with an emphasis on priorities and needs of MBE/DBE, with the needs of ALICE and our community partners to drive equitable investment and impact within our region
- c. Grow donor network reach and leadership engagement to mobilize volunteers and advocates

# COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY



- d. Provide opportunities for key executives and community leaders to join our mission, be part of the solution, and champion our vision of equitable communities
- e. Continue brand awareness campaign with messaging focused on COVID-19 impact while leveraging opportunities to lift up existing programming and promote new initiatives/resources

## 3) INFORM

- a. Launch 2020 ALICE Report with statewide ALICE survey data, methodology improvements – more local variation, better reflection of household composition, and more variations by household size - and new ALICE measures, including the Senior Survival Budget and the ALICE Essentials Index
- b. Develop our internal knowledge and practice to become a more equitable and equity-centered organization

## 4) INITIATE

- a. Reintroduce second cycle of Blueprint Collaborative Grants to drive systems-level change in target areas of health, education, and financial stability to build equitable communities
- b. Move into phase two of United for Early Care and Education partnership to provide program support to more child care providers and continue phase one support of pilot participants
- c. Rollout action strategy, outlined by GNO, Inc., with LCTCS and partners to upskill workers in industries hard-hit by COVID-19

*The aim of this COVID-19 response plan is to present a compelling path forward toward a stronger, more prosperous, and equitable region post-pandemic. Our Blueprint calls for businesses, nonprofits, governments, and individuals to join us in developing strategies and partnerships to generate impact, and we will continue to leverage new and existing relationships to that end. Together, we will stabilize ALICE households to create an equitable community where all individuals are healthy, educated, and financially stable.*