



United Way of Northeast Mississippi

Community Impact 'Elevator Speech'

What are we about?

Our **vision** is to be a catalyst for philanthropic growth and impact for Northeast MS. Our **mission** is to create opportunities to improve people's lives in the communities we serve.

What is a community impact funding model?

- Our purpose hasn't changed—our strategy has. We are focused on results.
- We are aligning our investments to programs—*not agencies*—that concretely address our 3 focus areas of **Academic Success, Health & Wellness, and Financial Stability** and specific strategies within those focus areas.

Why was this change necessary?

- Donors and prospective donors (both large and small) are demanding a greater return on investments and data proving that ROI.
- Workplace campaigns have stagnated. We lose a significant number of workplace donors each year due to factors outside our control. That is in line with what other United Ways across the U.S. have experienced and is expected to continue.
- In 2020, millennials (born 1980-1996) will make up roughly 50% of the U.S. workforce. Gen Z (born 1996-2010) is also entering the workforce. Therefore, we need to tailor our methods to reach these individuals who make up a large potential donor base.
- Millennials and Gen Zs are far less likely to give through the workplace than their predecessors and prefer to give online or on their mobile devices.
- Millennials and Gen Zs also prefer to donate directly to specific causes that align with their interests and want to see more stories of exactly how their gift made an impact.

What does the Community Impact model look like?

- We have shifted from being an organization that *raises dollars* to being an organization that *works to impact critical community needs*
- We have evolved from *agency funding* to *program funding*
- We increasingly serve as a "convener" – collaborating around common needs among agencies, identifying in-kind resources, tapping area experts, leveraging additional grants
- We are asking: **How much did we do? How well did we do it? How many are better off?**
- The plan will take 3-5 years to be fully implemented – we are in year 3.

THE TAKEAWAY

The landscape of philanthropy has changed, and United Way must change with it. Today's donors prefer to give to specific causes important to them, and they want to know how their investment is making an impact. United Way's role is no longer to be professional fundraisers for other organizations, but to identify the issues important in our community and to find solutions both by providing funding for programs and by convening community stakeholders to collaborate on community-wide solutions. Through increased outcome measurement reporting, recipients of United Way funding can show exactly how they have "moved the needle" on the issues they address, and United Way can communicate these outcomes on a community-wide level, showing our donors exactly how their investment has improved lives in our community.