



Tygart Valley
UNITED WAY

Thriving Community Plan

2026

Imagine a thriving community where every person has the opportunity to succeed, every family has the stability to build a better future, and every community is prepared to face challenges together.

The **Thriving Community Plan** represents a shared vision for the future of the Tygart Valley region. Developed through community conversations, stakeholder engagement, data analysis, and input from residents across our five-county service area, this plan identifies the issues that matter most and the opportunities that can create lasting change.

Rather than addressing challenges in isolation, the plan recognizes that community wellbeing is interconnected. Strong families support successful students. Financial security contributes to better health. Resilient communities are better prepared to respond to crises and recover from adversity.

The four Bold Goals outlined in this plan provide a framework for collective action. They are ambitious by design and intended to inspire collaboration among nonprofits, businesses, schools, healthcare providers, government agencies, faith communities, and residents. No single organization can achieve these goals alone.

Tygart Valley United Way will serve as a convener, collaborator, and catalyst for progress, bringing partners together around shared priorities, measurable outcomes, and a commitment to creating a region where everyone can thrive.

United is the Way.



Transforming How We Invest

Achieving the Bold Goals outlined in this plan will require more than funding individual programs. It will require intentional investments that encourage collaboration, innovation, and measurable community outcomes. As a result, Tygart Valley United Way is modernizing its community investment process to better align resources with the priorities identified through this Thriving Community Plan.

The updated process is designed to reduce administrative burden, improve transparency, strengthen accountability, and encourage organizations to work together toward shared outcomes.

Expanded Eligibility

To ensure a broader range of community solutions can be considered, Tygart Valley United Way is expanding eligibility for funding opportunities.

Key changes include:

- Organizations with annual revenues exceeding \$500,000 will be required to submit an annual audit, increasing the threshold from the previous \$250,000 requirement.
- Funding opportunities will be open to qualified nontraditional partners. Organizations will no longer be required to hold 501(c)(3) status if they can demonstrate the ability to successfully implement projects that align with community priorities.
- Preference will be given to collaborative initiatives that bring together multiple organizations, sectors, or programs to address complex community challenges through coordinated solutions.

New Letter of Intent Process

Beginning with the 2027 funding cycle, applicants will participate in a Letter of Intent (LOI) process prior to submitting a full application. The goal is to create a more strategic and supportive process that helps organizations strengthen proposals and maximize community impact.

This process will allow United Way to:

- Identify projects that align with the Thriving Community Plan priorities.
- Provide early feedback to applicants before significant time is invested in a full proposal.
- Notify organizations whether they will be invited to submit a full application.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration, partnerships, or shared approaches among applicants working on similar challenges.

Impact Area Review Panels

Applications will be reviewed by specialized Impact Area Panels composed of community leaders and subject matter experts.

Unlike the previous review process, panel members will evaluate all applications within their assigned impact area rather than reviewing only a single agency or program.

This approach will allow reviewers to better compare proposals, identify opportunities for alignment, and make funding recommendations based on a comprehensive understanding of community needs and available solutions.



Transforming How We Operate

Achieving our Bold Goals requires more than changing what we fund. It requires changing how we work. Tygart Valley United Way is evolving its approach to partnerships, fundraising, and program delivery to better align with community priorities and maximize impact.

Strengthening Community Partnerships

As we transition to a Bold Goals framework, our relationships with partner organizations will evolve as well.

Our focus will be on achieving meaningful results together rather than maintaining partnership structures that no longer serve their intended purpose.

Key changes include:

- Meeting individually with current and prospective partners to discuss opportunities and support the transition.
- Shifting from traditional agency partnerships to a grant partner model focused on shared outcomes and community impact.
- Reducing administrative requirements and reporting expectations whenever possible.
- Encouraging collaboration and partnerships that advance the priorities identified in the Thriving Community Plan.

Transforming the Campaign

Future campaigns will focus less on individual funded programs and more on the community outcomes we are working together to achieve. Rather than focusing on a public fundraising goal, we will focus on demonstrating the impact created through every dollar invested in our community.

Campaign messaging will emphasize:

- The four Bold Goals and priority issues facing our region.
- Stories of impact and measurable progress.
- Community-wide investments rather than individual funding allocations.
- The power of United Way's collective impact model to drive lasting change.

Elevating United Way Programs

United Way programs and grant-funded programs will be viewed as equal components of our community impact strategy.

All programs, regardless of who delivers them, contribute to the same Bold Goals and shared outcomes.

Moving Forward



- All United Way programs will align with one or more Bold Goals.
- Impact will be measured and reported consistently across initiatives.
- Communications will highlight both United Way programs and grant partner programs as part of one unified approach to community change.

Success will be measured not by who delivers services, but by the progress we make together toward a thriving community.



COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

BOLD GOAL

Build a resilient region where every community is prepared and equipped to respond to challenges and thrive through change.

PRIORITIES

Address systemic barriers to accessing existing services including lack of transportation, documentation requirements, and program navigation.

Create opportunities to build a coordinated crisis response among nonprofits, government, and community partners.

Strengthen the community's ability to respond to and recover from disasters and emergencies through preparedness and planning.

A photograph of a woman and a young boy in a classroom setting. The woman, with long brown hair, is wearing a white t-shirt with a logo and the words 'GIVE BACK'. She is smiling and looking down at the boy. The boy, with blonde hair, is wearing a blue t-shirt and has his arms raised. In the background, another woman is visible, also wearing a 'GIVE BACK' t-shirt. The classroom has a bulletin board and a sign that says 'One sharp pencil'.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITY

BOLD GOAL

Ensure every young person has the relationships, skills, and opportunities they need to reach their full potential.

PRIORITIES

Provide connections to mentoring and positive adult relationships for young people, especially at-risk youth, to encourage educational and character development.

Expand access to afterschool and summer learning opportunities through addressing barriers of transportation, affordability, and availability.

Promote the importance of social-emotional learning supports and youth mental health services in schools and community settings.

A photograph showing two men loading groceries into the open trunk of a silver car. The man on the left is wearing a bright yellow safety vest over a dark shirt. The man on the right is wearing a grey polo shirt and a black apron. The trunk is filled with various items, including bags of bread, a large head of lettuce, and boxes of produce. The background shows a clear sky and some trees.

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

BOLD GOAL

Improve community health and wellbeing by expanding access to care and prevention services.

PRIORITIES

Increase access to behavioral health services, especially in rural and underserved areas.

Improve food security as a contributor to physical and mental health.

Improve access to primary and preventative healthcare services.



FINANCIAL SECURITY

BOLD GOAL

Reduce financial hardship and create pathways to financial security for all people across our region.

PRIORITIES

Improve access to affordable childcare so parents can work or train.

Increase the number of residents earning a living or family-sustaining wage through educational and employer partnerships.

Increase economic stability for seniors, people with disabilities, and single-parent households.

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