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LIVE UNITED
United Way
United Way of Illinois

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Michael Stephan
Heart of Illinois United Way
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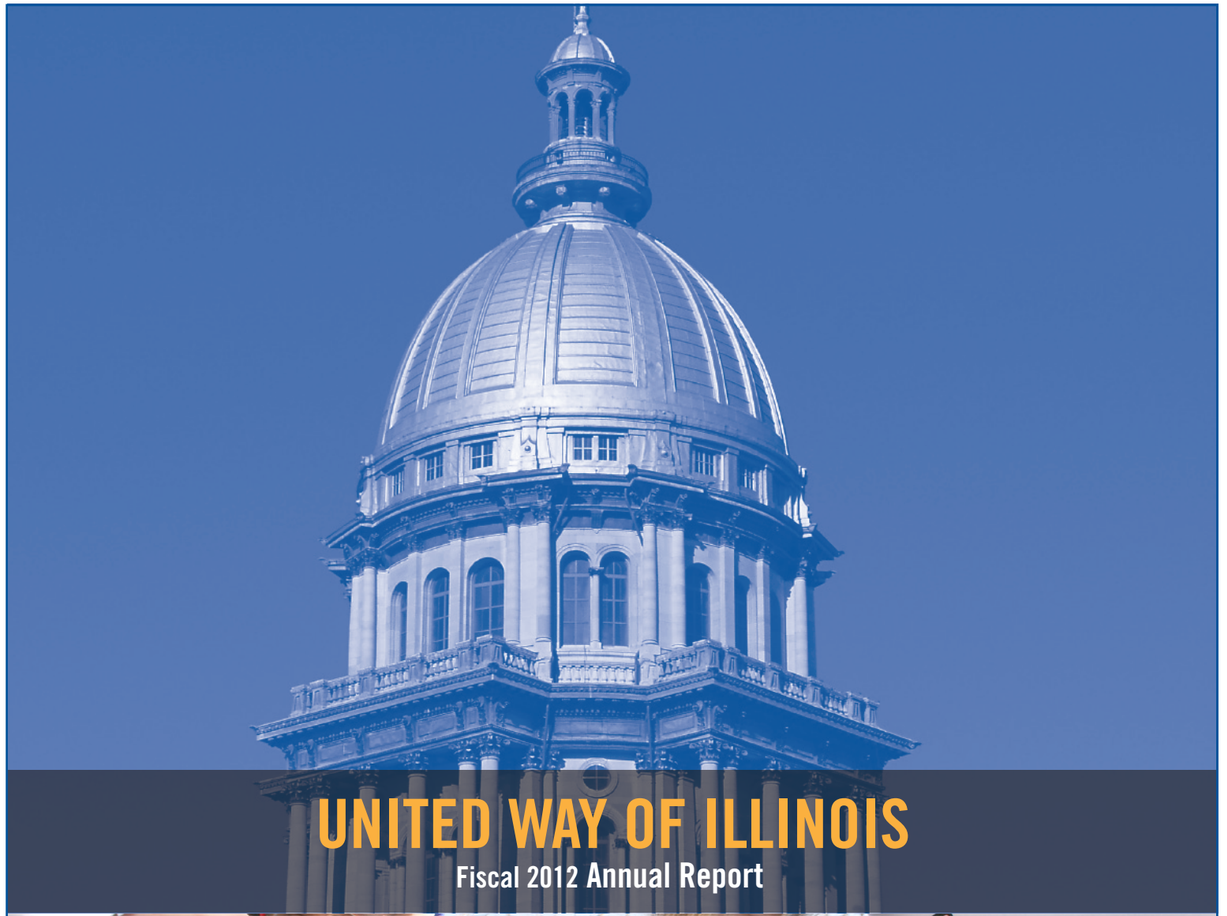
UNITED WAY STAFF AT 2012 LOBBY DAY IN SPRINGFIELD.



UNITED WAY OF ILLINOIS

Fiscal 2012 Annual Report

United Way of Illinois (UWI) is a statewide association of 53 local organizations that create long-lasting community change in helping children and youth achieve their potential, promoting financial stability and family independence and improving people's health.

Dear United Way of Illinois Members and Friends,

I am pleased to report to you and all the citizens of our state that in 2012, United Way of Illinois, once again, played a pivotal role in the support of critical human services. Our member United Ways all over the state encouraged people to **GIVE** more than $110,000,000 in order to advance the common good.

Millions of lives were changed for the better by thousands of local programs funded by United Way donors. Working together, United Way member organizations constituted the second largest funder of human services in the state of Illinois. As proud as I am of these impressive facts, they describe just some of the important work of United Way of Illinois and its member organizations.

2012 is taking its place in our state's history as another challenging year for government leaders and Illinois citizens. Tough decisions were made regarding state support of important programs that affect the quality of life of many of the state's most vulnerable persons. United Way of Illinois was there in Springfield to **ADVOCATE** for the people who otherwise would have no voice.

We led the efforts in support of legislation that codified the establishment of the Human Services Commission. Now, there will be a permanent Commission made up of a diverse group of representatives from both the public and private sectors. The Commission reviews and makes recommendations on such issues as timely and adequate reimbursement, outcome measures and best practices and accountability mechanisms for human service programs. It will also project the future need for human services and will identify opportunities for increased efficiency and collaboration among providers.

Our past efforts in laying the foundation for a statewide 2-1-1 system are now paying off as this essential information and referral service is spreading from the original three pilot sites to the Springfield and Rockford regions and beyond. 2-1-1 will be there to provide assistance and crisis services at the touch of a button. It will also help to match up those who wish to **VOLUNTEER** with service opportunities.

We look forward to continuing our work in the year ahead in support of people and organizations who **GIVE**, **ADVOCATE** and **VOLUNTEER**. Thank you for helping us to advance the **LIVE UNITED** movement throughout the state of Illinois.

Sincerely,

Paul A. Logli
President and CEO
United Way of Rock River Valley

Advancing the Common Good Through Public Policy

Our 2012 Public Policy Agenda focuses on four key areas:

INCOME: Building strong communities through financial stability

UWI will engage policymakers, business leaders and the non-profit community to craft policies that enable the state's lower-income families to achieve financial stability.

United Way will focus on two key policy strategies:

- Improving access to income supports by streamlining local and state processes for critical public benefits
- Increasing the impact of financial literacy education by incorporating quality standards and savings opportunities

SUCCESS: Passage of legislation to increase Illinois' Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) means low-income workers across the state will save an extra $105 million per year. UWI supports this boost for working families at a time when many are struggling to make ends meet. By 2013, the state's EITC, which assists more than 2.5 million Illinoisans, will double to 10% of the federal EITC.

EDUCATION: Laying the foundation for future success

UWI will advocate for state and local policies aimed at increasing student achievement from early childhood education and school-readiness to high school completion, college-readiness and workforce development.

Central to this policy are:

- Access to quality, affordable early learning opportunities beginning at birth
- Partnerships that support family engagement and community-based involvement
- Comprehensive and consistent assessment and measurement standards

SUCCESS: UWI actively advocated for a bill that creates the Commission for High School Graduation Achievement to study high school graduation in Illinois. The bill, which passed, aims to increase high school graduation rates and ultimately improve the state's workforce. With high school test scores reaching a record low in 2011, a concentrated effort is needed to understand the issues that affect high school graduation.

HEALTH: Ensuring access to care and preventing chronic disease

United Way of Illinois will support public policy initiatives to identify and advance efforts that achieve the long-term goal of improving people's physical and mental health.

To accomplish this goal, United Way will:

- Support access to health care that connects people to affordable, comprehensive health services
- Promote strategies that develop healthy lifestyles and ultimately combat preventable, chronic disease

SUCCESS: With UWI backing, the General Assembly passed a bill that creates the Enhance Physical Education Task Force which will promote and implement enhanced physical education programs that can be integrated with a broader wellness strategy and health curriculum in Illinois' elementary and secondary schools. This work is critical considering obesity affects 1 in 6 children nationwide.

HUMAN SERVICES SECTOR STRENGTH: Protecting non-profits to promote the common good

UWI will support policy initiatives that seek to strengthen the human services sector. We will promote the common good by ensuring that the state has a well-managed network of community services.

Protecting human services requires:

- A state budget that preserves the current level of investment in Illinois' health and human services
- Fair, efficient and transparent contracting practices between service providers and government funders
- Community resources that ensure a seamless infrastructure of health and human service support to those in need

SUCCESS: UWI actively advocated for a bill to codify the Illinois Human Services Commission during our annual Lobby Day. The bill's passage extends the Commission's life and allows it to continue its systemic review of human services programs. UWI serves on the Commission, which makes recommendations for achieving a system with efficient and effective delivery of high-quality human services.