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LIVE UNITED
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United Way of Illinois

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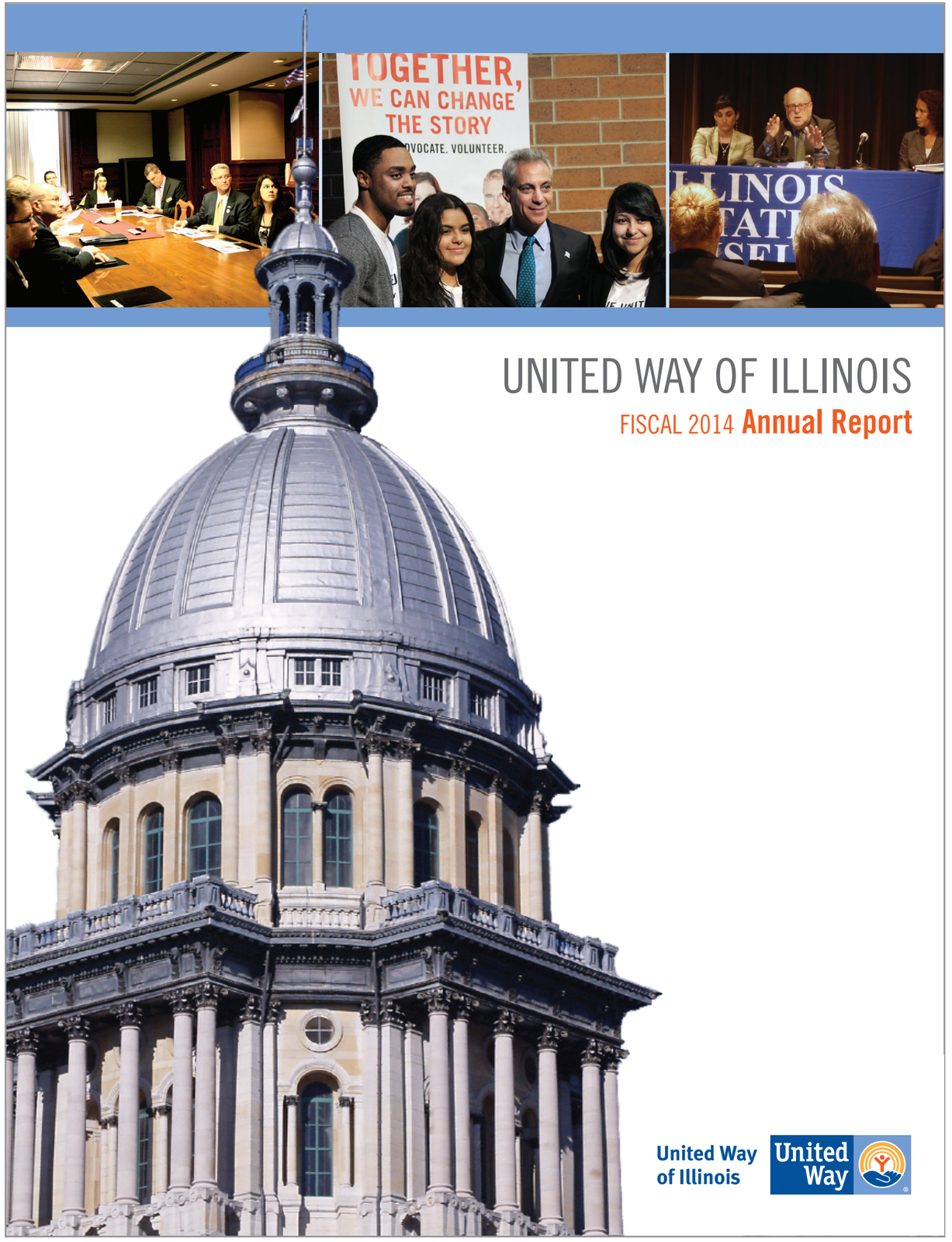
2014 LOBBY DAY IN SPRINGFIELD



UNITED WAY OF ILLINOIS

FISCAL 2014 **Annual Report**

United Way of Illinois
United Way

United Way of Illinois (UWI) is a statewide association of 50 local organizations that create lasting community change by helping children and youth succeed in school, promoting financial stability and family independence and improving people's health.

Dear United Way of Illinois Members and Friends,

During the past year, it has been my pleasure to lead the United Way of Illinois' Board of Directors and its 50 member state association. Our association and the local United Ways we bring together play a unique and critical role representing the social service sector throughout the state of Illinois and advancing the public good.

Together, our United Ways are the largest non-governmental funder of health and human services in the state. At a local level, each United Way is the largest funder of social service programs impacting Illinois' communities.

One of my personal highlights from the past year is our continued growth of 2-1-1 services—connecting those in need with the agencies best able to assist them—which now provide coverage to 43 counties across the state. In addition, we have developed a new spirit of cooperation between our State Association and the 2-1-1 Illinois board to continue the work of expanding services and developing new communication opportunities between call centers.

In April, our annual Lobby Day in Springfield brought us together to meet with our top elected officials on both sides of the aisle, in both houses of the General Assembly. More than 30 staff and volunteers from United Ways across the state advocated for sustained funding of critical health and human services and the remedying of disproportionate cuts to many programs serving our most vulnerable citizens.

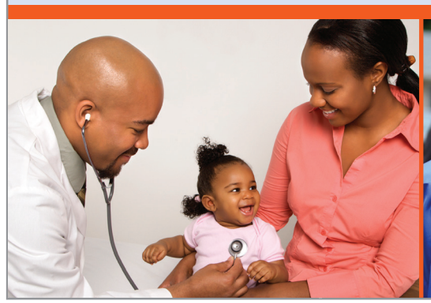
In May, an even larger group from Illinois joined the efforts of United Way Worldwide in Washington D.C. to meet with Illinois leadership and individual members of Congress. We amplified a national message to thank our leaders for their support of early education programs and to ask for their help to increase funding of the Community VITA Grant Program, to permanently extend current funding levels for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), to preserve charitable giving incentives, and to strengthen the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC).

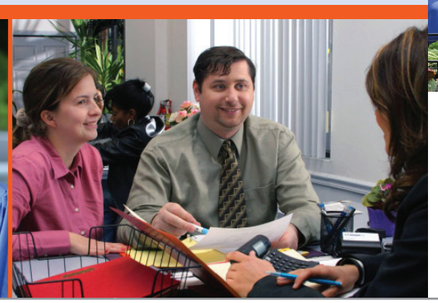
The voice of United Way and our collective representation of our local communities is making a difference. We are a highly respected advocate for serving those in need effectively, efficiently and with the goal of lasting positive change.

Looking forward, we will continue our work in support of individuals, programs and organizations that GIVE, ADVOCATE and VOLUNTEER, allowing us all to LIVE UNITED.

Sincerely,

John P. Kelker
Chair, United Way of Illinois
President, United Way of Central Illinois





Advancing the Common Good Through Public Policy

Our 2014 Public Policy Agenda:

EDUCATION: Laying the Foundation for Future Success

Illinois' competitiveness in a global economy depends upon academic achievement. To succeed, students must enter school ready to learn and navigate the transitions to high school, post-secondary study and work.

To ensure children receive a quality education and stay in school through graduation, United Way:

- Advocates to make high-quality, affordable early-learning opportunities available to all children
- Promotes partnerships that support family engagement and community-based involvement to improve student academic achievement
- Supports comprehensive and consistent assessment and measurement standards from Pre-K through high school graduation

SUCCESS: UWI teamed up with several concerned organizations to prevent a funding and programmatic crisis for community schools across Illinois. Our unified efforts led to improvements in how the state handles 21st Century Community Learning Center funding, which prevented 322 schools serving more than 30,000 students from losing or interrupting programs and services.

INCOME: Fostering Strong Communities through Financial Stability

Financial stability has taken on greater importance for many Illinoisans as our economy struggles to rebound. Households that are financially stable and have sufficient income to support their families create a stronger community and economy.

To ensure families and individuals have the resources they need to achieve financial stability, United Way will:

- Support increased access to work training programs and streamlined processes for critical public benefits
- Promote strengthening of financial literacy programs to help individuals avoid financial hardship and develop lifelong financial skills

SUCCESS: Illinois' Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is now 10% of the federal EITC, the result of UWI backed legislation that has doubled the state EITC since 2011. The increase puts $105 million into the pockets of more than 2.5 million working families, increasing their income and boosting local spending to stimulate the economy.

HEALTH: Preventing Chronic Disease and Ensuring Access to Care

Access to healthcare is the key to ensuring Illinoisans can lead healthy, productive lives. Receiving healthcare early in life and throughout adulthood is an important way to prevent obesity and properly manage the chronic diseases that are more prevalent today.

To ensure families and individuals are able to live healthy lives, United Way will:

- Support access to healthcare by connecting people to affordable, comprehensive health services
- Combat preventable chronic disease through the promotion of strategies that support wellness and healthy lifestyles

SUCCESS: Almost 217,500 Illinoisans signed up for health coverage for 2014 through the state's new health insurance marketplace, a key component of the Affordable Care Act. Another 38,510 Illinoisans are now covered through the Children's Health Insurance Plan and Medicaid. UWI supported the expansion of Medicaid to adults without children.

COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING: Building Capacity to Advance the Common Good

Much like roads, hospitals and schools, community services are part of our state's vital public infrastructure and must be maintained and strengthened. In order to continue advancing the common good, we must make sure the state has a well-managed and highly coordinated network of community services.

To ensure Illinois has the essential services that protect public health and safety, revitalize local economies and enhance learning, United Way will:

- Advocate for a state budget that preserves the current level of investment in Illinois' health and human services
- Promote fair, efficient and transparent contracting practices between service providers and government funders
- Support efforts to reduce unnecessary state administrative burdens on human service providers and their programs
- Streamline systems to ensure all people can connect to health and human services with the greatest possible efficiency

SUCCESS: UWI is leading the effort to expand 2-1-1 in Illinois. The toll-free, 24-hour information line that connects people with human service providers now covers 43 of the state's 102 counties. In 2013, 2-1-1 operators answered more than 71,000 calls to meet immediate needs, including food, shelter, mental health services and employment support.