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2017/2018 ANNUAL REPORT

United Way of Illinois

Dear United Way of Illinois Members and Friends,

The thing I've always admired about entrepreneurs is that they are not bound by "what is," they are inspired by "what could be."

As I put a bow on my year as board chair, I'm tempted to look back and reflect on the events of the past 12 months. Being the political scientist that I am, it seems odd to include "having a full and timely state budget" on the list of highlights, but after years of uncertainty on this point, we've learned to take nothing for granted. Also noteworthy is the continued growth of 2-1-1, and the grant with the Illinois Department of Public Health to develop a statewide dashboard identifying both the challenges that Illinois residents face in finding health and human services they need, and the gaps in services and resources available to meet those needs.

Standing in those gaps—and directing attention to them—is what United Way is called to do. As members of United Way of Illinois, however, we understand that current circumstances call for us to do more. We cannot fund, or fundraise, our way out of our communities' toughest challenges. Ensuring that all Illinoisans have access to education, financial stability, healthy lives and a coordinated network of community services requires that we fight for policies that advance the common good.

With our network of partners, our power to convene, and our strength as a respected advocate for serving those in need, we are uniquely positioned to effect real change. We do what we do because we believe in a future where students enter school ready to learn, families have the resources they need to be financially stable, and individuals can live healthy lives. We are united in the promise that all Illinois citizens will have access to a well-managed and highly coordinated network of community services. We must think big and be bold in our advocacy! We must lead with courage and inspire others with our vision of "what could be."

We must also bid farewell to Jack Kaplan, who is retiring this summer after 10 years as Director ofPublic Policy and Advocacy for United Way of Illinois and United Way of Metro Chicago. Jack has been a skilled and committed champion for our members and for the common good. He has also been most effective at keeping the volunteer leadership of our association on task, and on track.

Thank you, Jack, for your leadership. And to everyone reading this, thank you for a great year. There is much to do, but much to inspire us if we only imagine what could be.

Respectfully,

Dayna M. Stock, Ph.d.
Chair, United Way of Illinois
Vice President, Regions & Special Initiatives
United Way of Greater St. Louis

UNITED WAY OF ILLINOIS (UWI)

is a statewide association of 46 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.

ADVANCING THE COMMON GOOD THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY
OUR 2018 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA FOCUSED ON FOUR KEY AREAS:

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 of Illinois will:

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

SUCCESSES A Youth Budget Commission, which will perform a yearly fiscal scan of the state budget to show how public funding is reaching youth and young adults, was approved by the General Assembly and awaits the Governor's approval. The Commission will utilize the information in the fiscal scan to make recommendations about how the State can improve policy and programs for youth and young adults. An appropriation of $150,000 to pay for the fiscal scan was included in the new state budget.

INCOME

Fostering strong communities through financial stability

Financial stability has taken on greater importance for many Illinoisans as our economy rebounds. 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 of Illinois will:

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

SUCCESSES A federal waiver to allow the 260,000 able-bodied adults without dependents in Illinois to continue receiving SNAP (formerly food stamps) benefits was submitted by Governor Rauner after advocacy by a coalition of organizations including UWI.

HEALTH

Ensuring access to care and preventing chronic disease

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

To ensure families and individuals are able to live healthy lives, United Way of Illinois 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

SUCCESSES Legislation to develop a pilot program for community-based early treatment, specifically tailored to the needs of youth and young adults in the early stages of a serious emotional disturbance or mental health crisis passed both chambers and awaits the Governor's approval.

UWI organized a legislative briefing on behalf of the Illinois ACE Response Collaborative that provided an overview of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and how state systems can promote trauma-informed policies to ensure all Illinois children grow up stable, safe, healthy, educated, employable and connected.

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 that 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 of Illinois will:

- Advocate for a state budget that adequately funds strategic investments 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
- Enhance community resources that ensure a seamless infrastructure of health and human service support for those in need

SUCCESSES After several years of impasse and incompletion a state budget was enacted on time for FY19. It included increased funding for early childhood education and K-12 and no significant reduction to human service programs. This followed a UWI state budget survey describing the harm that would be caused by continued uncertainty and disruption without a budget.

A statewide dashboard displaying in real-time both the challenges that Illinois residents face in finding the health and human services they need, and the gaps in services and resources that could meet those needs, was created in partnership with the Illinois Department of Public Health and the 2-1-1 call centers serving Illinois. This structured dashboard will inform the public as well as decision makers, community leaders, advocates, and others who work to improve the livelihood of Illinois residents and families.