



UNITED WAY
Yampa Valley

2026-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN

UNITED IS THE WAY™



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INTRODUCTION

Northwest Colorado is a region of remarkable strength, generosity, and community connection. Routt, Moffat, and Rio Blanco counties are home to resilient residents, dedicated nonprofit organizations, and strong civic leadership. At the same time, the region faces growing economic and demographic pressures that affect the stability and access to opportunity of many households.

Across the region, the cost of housing, childcare, health care, and transportation continues to rise faster than wages. Approximately 7000 households (36%) struggle financially to meet basic needs. Of these, roughly 5,700 households earn too much to qualify for most public assistance programs but not enough to afford the true cost of living in their communities. Older adults living on fixed incomes face similar challenges as housing and health care costs increase.

The region is also experiencing broader economic and workforce transitions. Changes in traditional energy industries and evolving workforce needs are affecting communities across the three counties. At the same time, rural non-profit service providers face increasing demand for

assistance while navigating limited staffing, funding constraints, and the challenges of serving residents across a large geographic area.

In addition to economic pressures, communities across Northwest Colorado must be prepared for unexpected disruptions, such as wildfires, natural disasters, and other emergencies, which can quickly strain households and nonprofit systems.

United Way of the Yampa Valley plays a unique role in this environment. By working at the household, nonprofit, and community levels, United Way helps connect resources, strengthen nonprofit partners, and support working families before financial challenges escalate into crises.

This strategic plan outlines how United Way of the Yampa Valley will focus its leadership, partnerships, and resources over the next three years to strengthen household stability, support nonprofit partners, and help communities across Northwest Colorado adapt and thrive during a crisis.

Together, the following vision, mission, and strategic objectives will guide United Way of the Yampa Valley's work and partnerships from 2026 through 2029.



OUR MISSION AND VISION

United Way of the Yampa Valley strengthens household financial stability and community resilience.

We support working families and older adults, fill critical gaps in affordability and access to essential services, and strengthen the systems that help people navigate everyday financial challenges and recover from crises.

We envision a resilient Northwest Colorado where struggling households have affordable access to opportunities and essential services to improve their financial stability.



OUR ROLE IN THE REGION

United Way of the Yampa Valley is the only organization in the region that works simultaneously at the household, nonprofit, and community levels.

We do not replace direct service providers. Our programs work with non-profit partners and local governments to strengthen, coordinate, and align the human services ecosystem so our target households receive help earlier, nonprofits operate more effectively, and communities recover faster from disruption.



United Way
of the Yampa Valley

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:

SUPPORT HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL STABILITY

United Way of the Yampa Valley helps working families and older adults achieve and maintain stability and avoid financial crises through early intervention, financial education, and workforce advancement opportunities.

THE CHALLENGE

Across Routt, Moffat, and Rio Blanco counties, many working households and older adults struggle to afford necessities. Rising housing costs, long commutes from more affordable communities, limited childcare availability, and wages that lag the cost of living contribute to chronic financial strain. Our target constituencies – working households earning above traditional assistance thresholds, but below what it takes to be financially secure, and seniors living on fixed incomes – are particularly vulnerable. Existing systems often respond after households reach crisis rather than earlier, when stabilization is possible.

OUR ROLE

United Way of the Yampa Valley focuses on early intervention and stabilization, filling gaps that traditional systems miss and reinforcing nonprofit partners whose work helps households remain housed, employed, and financially stable. We bundle donor funds into program grants and other assistance, so that households pay less for essentials, and our donors get a unique opportunity to invest directly in households that need help.



KEY PROGRAMS

Emergency and resource referral support

Grant awards through proven partners for programs that directly lower what households pay for essential services

Holiday cost relief initiative

Financial education courses

Skilled trades scholarship program

GOAL 1.1: REDUCE SHORT-TERM FINANCIAL STRAIN FOR TARGET HOUSEHOLDS

ACTIVITIES

- Provide emergency resource navigation and referrals for housing, utilities, food, transportation, and healthcare.
- Offer targeted stabilization assistance directly to clients when small interventions can prevent larger crises.
- Operate the Holiday Cost Relief Initiative, providing dignified gift card support during the holiday season.
- Bundle donor funds into grant awards to non-profit programs for fee-for-service discounts and scholarships to qualifying households to reduce what they pay for necessary services in the areas of childcare, preschool education, and high-impact essentials. Leverage a team of experienced volunteers to coordinate the grant-making process, review applications, and recommend awards. (See also Goal 2.2)
- Transition the Thanksgiving Community Dinner toward a shared community model with UWYV providing support rather than full operational leadership.
- Build relationships that can evolve into workforce and childcare stabilization partnerships

MEASURES-OUTPUTS

- 100**
Number of households receiving stabilization support
- 50**
Number of successful referrals to partner organizations
- 120+**
Number of households helped annually with childcare & essential service costs through UWYV grants & resources
- 1,000**
Holiday gift cards distributed annually
- 800+**
People served with meals and fellowship at the Community Thanksgiving Dinner through collaboration with partners
- 100**
Reduction in hours of UWYV staff program and operational time dedicated to the Community Thanksgiving Dinner and Holiday gift card program..

SCALE APPROACH

These programs will expand as funding and administrative capacity allow.



GOAL 1.2: INCREASE FINANCIAL CAPABILITY AND LONG-TERM STABILITY

ACTIVITIES

- Provide financial education courses, including budgeting, credit, homeownership, personal insurance, and investing.
 - Offer free dinners to remove participation barriers.
 - Partner with financial institutions and community experts to deliver training.
- Create a social enterprise fund and business development training to support workers who wish to scale up a side income while simultaneously giving back to the community.

MEASURES-OUTPUTS



60

Number of residents completing financial education courses annually



80+%

Participant feedback reporting financial improvements:



2

Small social enterprises created





GOAL 1.3: SUPPORT WORKFORCE PATHWAYS THAT IMPROVE LONG-TERM HOUSEHOLD STABILITY

ACTIVITIES

- Expand the Skilled Trades Scholarship Program supporting regional workforce development.
- Partner with employers, training institutions, and economic development organizations to identify workforce pathways.

MEASURES



10

Number of scholarships awarded annually



2-5

Workforce program participation rates

SCALE APPROACH

This program will intentionally operate at a modest, high-impact scale during this plan period. Expansion will occur only when dedicated funding and administrative capacity are secured.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: STRENGTHEN NONPROFIT PARTNERS AND SYSTEMS

United Way of Yampa Valley will strengthen the nonprofit ecosystem through collaboration, convening, and shared learning.

THE CHALLENGE

Human services systems are delivered by many organizations with varying capacity and geographic reach. Smaller nonprofits face rising overhead costs, staffing constraints, and limited access to sustainable funding. Without coordination and aligned advocacy, service gaps persist, and opportunities to improve affordability and access are limited.

OUR ROLE

United Way of the Yampa Valley strengthens nonprofit partners by serving as a convener, fiscal agent, funding intermediary, and steward of community resources, helping organizations operate more efficiently and reach households earlier.

KEY PROGRAMS

Human Resource Coalition (HRC) coordination in Routt and Moffat counties

Nonprofit convening and shared training

Grantmaking and partner support in all three counties

GOAL 2.1: IMPROVE COORDINATION AMONG HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

ACTIVITIES

- Facilitate the Human Resource Coalition in Routt and Moffat counties.
- Convene nonprofit partners to share information, identify service gaps, and coordinate responses.
- Promote cross-county collaboration to increase awareness and leverage funding across Routt, Moffat, and Rio Blanco counties.

MEASURES-OUTPUTS



2-10

Number of participating organizations



10-12

Number of annual convenings and collaborative initiatives



GOAL 2.2: STRENGTHEN NONPROFIT CAPACITY

UWYV provides ongoing training, collaboration opportunities, and strategic grantmaking to support the nonprofit partners who serve households facing financial hardships.

ACTIVITIES

- Provide targeted grantmaking aligned with our three objectives and household stability priorities. (See also Goal 1.1)
- To expand access to early childhood education and care, support quality early childhood education and teacher and/or caregiver training through conferences and other initiatives conducted in collaboration with Connections 4 Kids and First Impressions, among others.
- Offer training and convening opportunities for nonprofit leaders.
- Offer Day of Caring volunteer service projects that support non-profit partners.
- Support shared information and referral systems.

MEASURES-OUTPUTS



20+

Number of organizations receiving grants or training



300/30

Annual number of Day of Caring volunteers & nonprofits



5

Number of nonprofits participating in capacity-building events

GOAL 2.3: STRENGTHEN UWYV'S REGIONAL FUNDRAISING CAPACITY

UWYV will raise and steward funds to increase our support for household stability initiatives, UWYV operations/programs, and nonprofit partnerships.

ACTIVITIES

- Establish and implement a rigorous donor engagement plan including measures of success.
 - Expand donor engagement through campaigns, events, and community partnerships.
 - Strengthen relationships with businesses, foundations, and individual donors.
- Develop collaborative fundraising initiatives with Women United, Youth United Way, and key business partners that support nonprofits in the region.
- Explore prefunding some months of compensation to launch a self-sustaining role that supports donor/grantor fundraising.

MEASURES-OUTPUTS



Grow

Total fundraising at a rate exceeding inflation



2000+

Number of donors and sponsors engaged



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:

BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

United Way of the Yampa Valley will help communities prepare for and recover from crises, disasters, and economic disruptions.

THE CHALLENGE

The region faces increasing risk from wildfires, residential emergencies, and economic disruptions, including coal industry transitions. Target households are disproportionately affected by limited savings, transportation, and support networks.

OUR ROLE

United Way of the Yampa Valley focuses on community-facing resilience, coordinating volunteers, strengthening nonprofit preparedness, and guiding recovery support toward households most at risk of long-term instability.

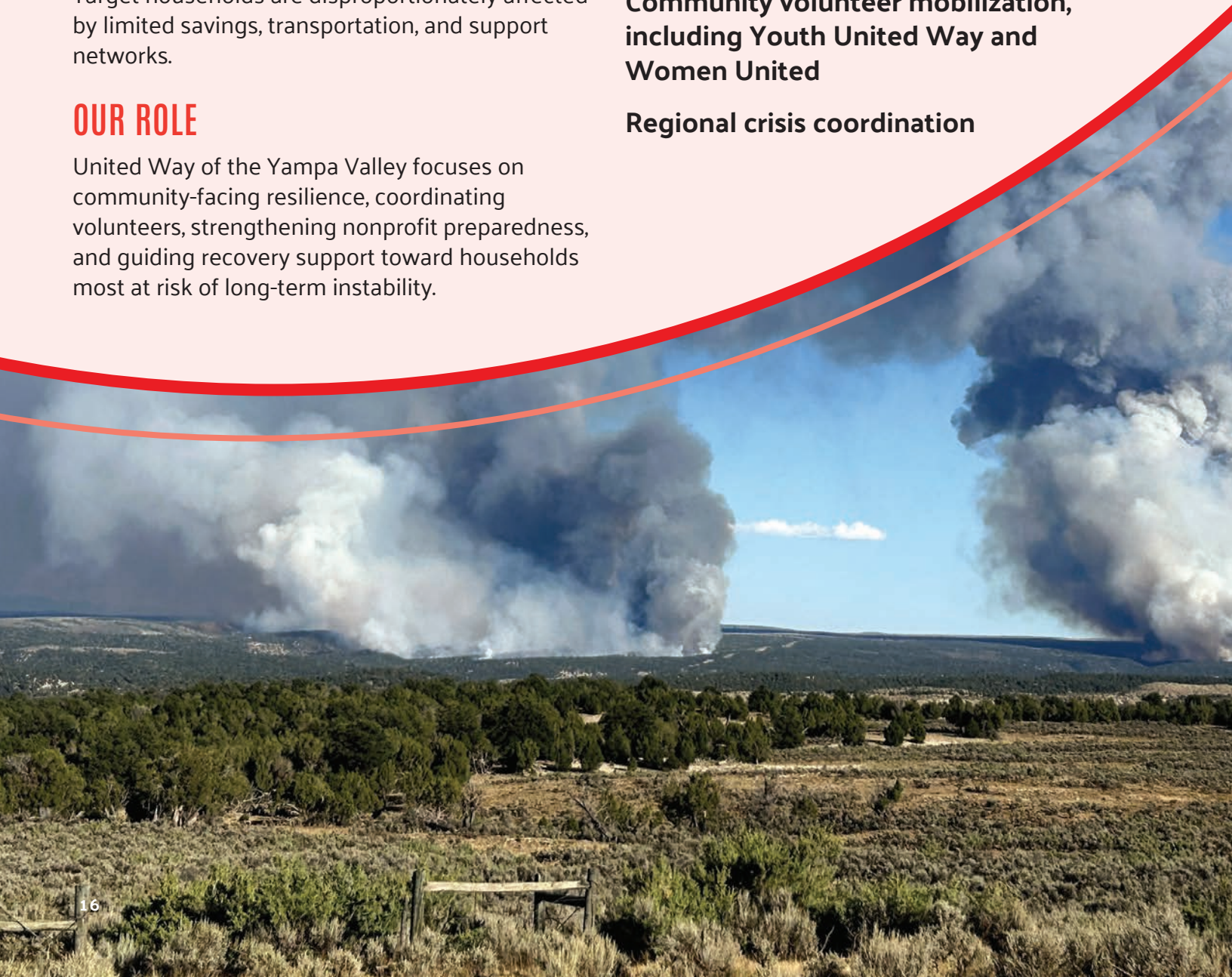
KEY PROGRAMS

Wildfire preparedness and recovery partnerships in all three counties

Red Cross volunteer training and regional emergency preparedness

Community volunteer mobilization, including Youth United Way and Women United

Regional crisis coordination





GOAL 3.1: STRENGTHEN REGIONAL PREPAREDNESS

UWYV will help train and mobilize at least 100 community volunteers for preparedness and response.

ACTIVITIES

- Partner with the American Red Cross and others to host regional volunteer training.
- Develop volunteer networks capable of supporting wildfire or emergency response.
- Coordinate preparedness efforts with nonprofit and public partners.

MEASURES

- 100+**
Number of volunteers trained
- 3**
Number of preparedness training courses conducted

GOAL 3.2: SUPPORT RECOVERY FOLLOWING DISRUPTIONS

UWYV will coordinate resources supporting at least 200 households affected by disasters or economic disruptions.

ACTIVITIES

- Convene partners to coordinate recovery resources following community disruptions.
- Mobilize volunteers and community resources to support recovery efforts.

MEASURES-OUTPUTS

- *40+**
Number of households supported during recovery efforts.
* Dependent on scale of disruption.
- 6+**
Number of coordinated response initiatives with Yampa Valley Community Foundation



STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY

STEP-OUT INITIATIVE TO BUILD FUTURE CAPACITY

As priorities and resources permit, the Board encourages staff to propose and delineate at least one new initiative within the scope of existing objectives that addresses systemic or otherwise highly impactful change and affords opportunity for staff creativity and growth.

ACCOUNTABILITY & STEWARDSHIP

ACTIVITIES

- Staff will develop implementation plans with annual deliverables. Plans and deliverables will be updated each fiscal year to inform the annual budget process.
- Staff will meet at least twice a year to identify and share opportunities for continuous improvement and lessons learned that can reduce costs or improve program delivery.
- At least once each year and as input to the preparation of an annual report to stakeholders, staff will report results to the Board. The report will show results versus output and outcome indicator targets, discuss any material changes to operating priorities and consequent plans, and list actions staff have taken to improve program effectiveness and cost efficiency.

MEASURES-OUTCOMES

Staff will identify appropriate SMART outcome indicators to track impact in 2027-2029.

FINAL NOTE

This strategic plan is intentionally focused, realistic, and disciplined. It reflects clear choices about where United Way of the Yampa Valley adds the most value and how the organization's available resources are stewarded to produce measurable, lasting impact.





GET INVOLVED

Get Involved. Give Back. Take Action.

unitedwayoftheyampavalley.org

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