



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 - 2029



Prepared with Strategy Matters and adopted by  
Board of Directors September 26, 2024  
*Revised September 25, 2025*

# UNITED WAY OF GREATER NEW BEDFORD STRATEGIC PLAN



## INTRODUCTION

Since 1953, United Way of Greater New Bedford (UWGNB) has been a steadfast presence in the area, investing in the South Coast and mobilizing resources to build stronger, more connected communities thanks to the generosity of local companies, their employees, and many donors. The work our partners and we do directly within the community and the broader trends we see across our region yield important insights that inform our impact areas. They have helped us understand the interconnection of system-wide issues affecting these areas whose root causes stem from racial, social, economic, and other disparities.

With this in mind, we strategically align our expertise, programs, and grantmaking, and our role as a leader and convener to reduce significantly prevalent problems such as poverty, which we have found to be a contributing factor and common thread across basic needs like food security, access to health services, and shelter. This holistic approach allows us to tackle these issues effectively.

The 2024-2029 United Way of Greater New Bedford Strategic Plan culminates these efforts and reflects a commitment to be more intentional about our impact areas. Moving forward, to guide our prioritization for transformative change, they will be integrated into newly organized and categorized impact areas of Healthy Community, Youth Opportunity, Financial Security, and Community Resiliency.

Our plan over the next five years includes three main goals to enable continued success in these impact areas.

- Establish measurable community impact strategies and collaborate with partners to catalyze equitable outcomes.
- Grow participation and support through proactive engagement with current and potential partners, donors, and volunteers.
- Build our organizational strength and agility.

Collectively, our strategy, impact areas focus, and goals for the coming years will maximize regional collaboration and harness the full spectrum of resources and capabilities that UWGNB brings to the community.

UWGNB looks forward to partnering with you to advance our mission and realize the plan outlined in the following pages. Your support and collaboration are instrumental in driving the innovative, community-driven work for which UWGNB is known. Together, we can make meaningful impacts that strengthen our region.



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## OUR CORE COMMITMENTS

### VALUES

**Empathy:** We show great care towards the diverse communities we serve. We believe in the inherent value of all people, and we strive to ensure a sense of belonging for everyone.

**Integrity:** We conduct our relationships openly, honestly, and fairly where commitments are honored, and the spirit of generosity can be nurtured.

**Agility:** We embrace and adapt to the changing needs of our communities.

### VISION

A region where all people have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

### MISSION

To mobilize people, partnerships, and resources to catalyze change that strengthens the communities we serve.

### STRATEGY

To fulfill our mission United Way of Greater New Bedford's work will:

- Sustain our vital role as the leading provider of immediate support to households in crisis
- Grow our work to put households on pathways for long-term success
- Expand efforts to convene and connect leaders and partners on the fundamental social issues facing our region

We'll do this by leveraging our experience and capacity to approach our work comprehensively, capitalizing on our role as an essential service provider, funder, convener and community leader.



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## IMPACT AREAS

In our role as a funder, convener, and operator of programs, our organization is positioned uniquely to catalyze change and lead collective efforts in our four impact areas:

### Healthy Community

Improving health and wellbeing for all.

- Nutrition & food security
- Mental health
- Maternal & child health
- Substance misuse

### Youth Opportunity

Helping young people realize their full potential.

- Early education and childcare
- In- school, after- school & summer learning
- Literacy development

### Financial Security

Creating a stronger financial future for every generation.

- Financial education and coaching
- Public benefits access
- Homelessness prevention & affordable housing

### Community Resiliency

Addressing urgent needs today for a better tomorrow.

- Child abuse and neglect prevention
- Safe living environments

Authentic, sustainable progress in these impact areas requires directing attention to the complex, intertwined systems in which they exist. It also means attention to the disparities that necessitate targeted responses for us to impact and reach “all.” UWGNB will boldly advance our methods of attracting philanthropic support and responsibly steward the resources entrusted to us. Our strategy and goals for the coming years will maximize regional collaboration and harness the full spectrum of resources and capabilities that UWGNB brings to the community.



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## GOAL 1

**Address our most pressing regional challenges through measurable community impact strategies and collaborate with partners to catalyze equitable outcomes.**

UWGNB will align its expertise, programs, and grantmaking with regional needs to deploy a full spectrum of resources and capabilities to address the root causes of our most pressing regional challenges. With input from the community, we will refine grantmaking and program practices, track progress, ensure equitable outcomes, and evaluate effectiveness. We will measure impact to provide understanding and clarity of purpose.

### OBJECTIVES

- a. Establish and implement a process for auditing our equity practices internally and externally.
- b. Listen to and engage with community members - especially those experiencing the challenges we are addressing - to share ownership and solutions that address our region's needs and build on its strengths.
- c. Use community insights to bring our resources to audiences and organizations that reflect community priorities.
- d. Measure outcomes of our investments (grantmaking and programs we operate) to determine efficacy.
  - i. Identify indicators for impact areas that connect to intended outcomes.
- e. Use research, data, and feedback to align programs, reduce duplication, optimize resource efficiency, and leverage our assets and resources equitably.
- f. Gauge partner organization roles and enhance regional capacity to build networks that support our impact areas.
- g. Develop meaningful volunteer opportunities to expand capacity and deepen support to partners.



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## GOAL 2

**Leverage our unique role in the region to grow participation and support through proactive engagement with current and potential partners, donors, and volunteers.**

UWGNB will promote its unique value through an effective marketing strategy that builds upon its strong reputation across audiences and channels. The greater visibility will assist us in implementing a robust stewardship program that ensures volunteers and donors have the deepest awareness of UWGNB and its extensive work in the community to invest their time, treasure, and talent in meaningful change.

### OBJECTIVES

- a. Consistently and proactively articulate unique value proposition and leverage UWGNB's brand assets to build a strong reputation across audiences and channels within all the communities UWGNB serves.
  - i. Create branding and marketing materials that showcase today's modern UWGNB.
  - ii. Leverage the 75th anniversary to heighten visibility, awareness, and support of our work.
  - iii. Segment communications channels and customize content to target specific audiences effectively.
- b. Implement a robust stewardship program to ensure donors and volunteers are deeply aware of UWGNB and its extensive work in the community.
  - i. Devise a new approach to enlist existing and new donors to become consistent, active supporters of UWGNB.



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## GOAL 3

### **Build our own organizational strength and agility.**

Authentic, meaningful work requires investing in people and systems for organizational health. UWGNB will equip our board and staff with the tools needed to continue diversifying our revenue streams, building an equitable and forward-thinking culture, and identifying opportunities to support efficiency and impact.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- a. Build an equitable and forward-thinking culture supported by human resources best practices.
- b. Equip the Board of Directors with the knowledge and tools to serve as ambassadors for UWGNB for community outreach, unearthing opportunities, including philanthropic giving.
- c. Create capacity by further engaging volunteers in the work of UWGNB through committees.
- d. Seek out new opportunities to continue diversifying revenue streams, including raising additional unrestricted support revenue.
  - i. Explore feasibility and return on investment for Fee for Service program models.
  - ii. Explore institutional, public, and foundation funding for UWGNB impact areas.
  - iii. Create a strategy to grow endowment.
- e. Explore opportunities for collaboration or efficiencies with other local United Ways (UW)
- f. Identify technology to enable organizational efficiencies and impact measurement.



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## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In the fall of 2023, UWGNB launched a strategic planning process. Working with Strategy Matters, UWGNB leadership co-created an approach designed to build on many already-existing elements of a plan for the future, while taking into account the need for staff engagement and a foundation for basing the plan in the New Bedford region's most pressing needs and already existing assets.

### Process Recap



This multiphase process sought input from leadership, staff throughout the organization, board members, community partners, grantees, and landscape data.



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