

Monadnock United Way

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Frequently Asked Questions February 10, 2020

MUW will update this FAQ as questions are received. They are noted in blue.

Q. What is MUW's Vision?

A. We envision a region free of child abuse and neglect and filled with opportunities for education and financial stability so that people of all ages can realize their dreams.

What has happened since you launched your 2016 Strategic Plan?

In 2016, MUW conducted a months-long strategic planning process with community stakeholders that included research of our community's well-being, donor preferences and best practices. Our goal was to invest donor dollars in areas that, together, would have the most positive impact possible. Research conducted in 2012 pointed to three key areas of need: Children, Education and Financial Stability. Then, as now, the data reveals some stark truths:

- Our region has the third highest rate of child abuse and neglect in the state
- Children in this region score lower than the rest of the state in English and math
- The poverty rate in Cheshire County is 1 in 4. In the rest of NH the rate is 1 in 5

Community Impact (CI) was chosen as the foundation of our model. CI brings programs together to work toward shared goals and activities. It minimizes duplication of services and maximizes outcomes for the people being served.

In tandem with our partners we embarked on a multi-year transition process, aimed at providing each of our partners a path to success. We systematically scheduled allocations over a 3-year period while providing training and transition funding for partners.

During this time, we increased our fundraising efforts – through the workplace campaign, through online outreach, and by seeking new philanthropic streams of support.

Q. What is the state of MUW's Workplace Campaign?

A. We had anticipated that enhancements and increased energy in the workplace campaign would increase community support and return the campaign to its former height of \$2 million annually. Unfortunately, the campaign has continued to steadily decline. Trends include:

Ten years ago:

- The workplace campaign raised \$2.1 million
- Two workplace campaigns raised over \$200,000 and two raised over \$100,000
- 4,700 individuals donated to MUW

Today:

- The workplace campaign raised \$1.3 million
- One workplace campaign raises over \$100,000
- 2,900 individuals donated to MUW

Q. Are there fundraising streams that show growth or promise?

A. Yes. We have seen growth in the following areas:

The new funding streams are showing promise and steady growth with \$160,000 raised in 2019 from sources outside of the campaign.

- In 2019, our community raised \$160,000 over and above campaign gifts from individuals and foundations to support [Impact Monadnock](#), our early childhood initiative to prepare children for academic, career and life success
- Giving by our most generous supporters has increased by 28% in the past three years

Q. What are the factors behind the decline in giving?

A. National giving trends

Donor and corporate behaviors are changing, and our annual fundraising campaign reflects what is happening nationwide. While the amount given to charity was up 1.6% from 2017-18, the total number of givers has declined, a trend that started in 2004. Increasingly, wealthier individuals are giving more while those who give between \$1 and \$999 are declining 4% nationally between 2017-18.

Workplace giving trends

Many companies are significantly reducing or eliminating traditional workplace campaign activities that highlight local human service organizations. Locally and nationally, employers want to give their employees greater choice when it comes to philanthropy. Many opt to use generic on-line giving platforms that highlight a broad range of charities in place of a United Way Campaign. Some companies who still hold United Way Campaigns opt to make pledge forms available but schedule minimal activities. Without the opportunity for employees to meet leaders of locally-based charitable organizations and learn how their donations affect people living in the community, giving declines. Personal connections to the local community decline as well.

Q. What has MUW achieved since launching the Strategic Plan?

A. During the last three years, we have moved steadily toward our vision of a region free of child abuse and neglect and filled with opportunities for education and financial stability.

We have:

- Piloted a successful collective – the [Monadnock Home Visiting Alliance](#)
- Funded innovation with four new collectives
- Developed a clear framework, measurement system, and guidelines for our funded initiatives
- Provided group and individual training to build capacity for our partners
- Attracted state funding for early childhood into the region
- Become a statewide leader in the early childhood sector through Impact Monadnock

Q. With less funds being raised, what is MUW going to do?

A. MUW is committed to addressing the issues identified through our strategic planning research. Therefore, we must realign our annual investment to a size that is sustainable, impactful and reflects community support.

Beginning in February 2020, MUW will invest \$900,000 in a highly targeted group of nine partnerships and activities that support the overall well-being of children and families in the following areas:

- Emergency housing and access to food, which is foundational to success in daily life,
- Early childhood success through supports including quality childcare, early learning and development of social-emotional skills, and
- Family resources including access to services, parent education and wrap-around supports.

Q. Who will you be investing in?

A. MUW will be working in a collaborative CI model with the following programs and activities:

- Cheshire County Emergency Housing Collaborative
- Monadnock Food Pantries Collective
- Monadnock Home Visiting Alliance
- Monadnock Region Afterschool Collective
- Monadnock Parent Education Collective
- Financial Assistance for 6 Early Childhood Centers
- WIC Dental Program
- Impact Monadnock Pyramid Model Initiative
- Impact Monadnock Business Ambassadors

For detailed descriptions of each program, the partners within them and the grant amounts, visit muw.org/2020investments.

Q. What will happen to the partners not listed above?

A. All other partners will receive funding through April 30, 2020. We will provide guidance as they seek out new sources of funds. This decision was difficult for MUW and our board to make. Every one of our partners plays an essential role in the health of this community.

Q. I designated my donation to a specific program. What will happen to my donation?

A. Designated donations will be honored and paid to those agencies without reduction. Agencies will receive designations from the 2019 campaign in full in June of this year. (Updated 2/11/20)

Q. Why did you choose this particular group?

A. We believe we can make a greater impact by investing in a targeted group of programs that focus on the stability of families and children. While all of our partners support the success of children and families, we had to make some difficult decisions, as there were insufficient funds available.

Q. Will these changes affect staffing at MUW?

A. In the middle of 2019, MUW had 8.5 full-time equivalents. In 2020, we will consolidate roles to 6 full-time equivalents.

Q. How do you know that focusing on the stability of families and children is the right thing to do?

A. Research supports that stabilizing families has a tangible impact on children, today's workforce as well as the next generation. Here are a few of the research studies and results:

Perry Preschool Project

[Nobel Laureate James Heckman](#)'s research shows that high quality investments in early childhood and families break the cycle of poverty and reap benefits for two generations. The second generation of children in this study are much more likely to:

- Spend 3X more time with stably married parents before age 18
- Complete high school without suspension
- Never be suspended, addicted or arrested
- Be employed full time or self-employed

RAND research

Two commissioned research projects around early childhood in New Hampshire were conducted by the RAND corporation over the last few years. These reports support investing in families and children through services such as home visiting and early childhood supports.

- [Investing in the Early Years: The Costs and Benefits of Investing in Early Childhood in New Hampshire](#)
- [Advancing Investments in the Early Years: Opportunities for Strategic Investments in Evidence-Based Early Childhood Programs in New Hampshire](#)

Q. Will the outcomes that MUW is looking for be short-term or long-term? Will measurements be shared?

A. The goals and outcomes are broad and long-term. MUW is looking to support community-level change, which takes time. Collecting performance measures and indicators will help track short-term progress toward long-term goals. Shared measurements will be important to keep programs aligned with common goals. Our annual [Community Impact Report](#) includes both broad community-level measures (such as the rates of child abuse and neglect) as well as program-based performance indicators (such as the number of children whose literacy skills improved).

Q. Aren't you straying from your original focus on children, education and financial stability?

A. Together, the funded initiatives impact all three areas - both today and in the future. Children receive the support needed to grow, thrive and learn in safe, caring environments. That foundation supports strong educational attainment and the ability to move from poverty into financial stability. In addition to receiving parenting support and training, families and caregivers also gain access to the services needed so that they may be employed and stable.

Q. What is MUW's value for partners and for donors?

A. Although the campaign is declining, our commitment to the community remains the same:

- We will bring multiple sectors together to solve our region's toughest problems
- We will seek and invest in solutions that strengthen the fabric of our community today and tomorrow
- We will advocate and aggressively fundraise for the benefit of this community
- We will collaborate with our partners and support their success – and that of the individuals they serve
- We will transparently report our successes and challenges to you, our community

Q. How will the CI model make it easier for agencies to stay focused on their mission and do their work?

A. MUW's impact investment funding model encourages a collective approach between agencies to addressing our region's most pressing needs. Impact helps agencies achieve their missions through a high-level of collaboration.

Q. If MUW is applying for grants, aren't you competing with the programs you serve?

A. MUW has been, and will continue to be, intentional about grants. We review each opportunity to determine whether MUW or one of our partners would be best served by the grant. We have applied for funds on behalf of partners. We have co-authored grants in tandem with our partners. We write letters of support whenever partners need them for grant funding. And finally, we share grant info with partners who may benefit from applying.

Q. Is MUW funding only collectives?

A. The nine initiatives that MUW is funding includes a mix of collectives and individual programs. Collectives of three or more programs receive amounts of \$70,000 or more per year. Individual programs receive \$10,000 or more per year. These amounts are subject to change in future years as MUW's Investment Process evolves.

Q: What other research was conducted before you embarked on your strategic plan?

In 2012 MUW, The NH Charitable Foundation and NH Center for Public Policy Studies conducted extensive research and published a report called Community Well-Being in the Monadnock Region. A steering committee with broad community representation participated in this process. The report uncovered 15 challenges facing our region -- from healthcare, to education, to safety and security and more. Of those, three focus areas rose to the top because of their significance and MUW's ability to convene the community in addressing them. They are: Children, Education and Financial Stability.

During the 2016 strategic planning process, MUW conducted research with the UNH Research Center and found that MUW is viewed as having a strong and trusted relationship with the community. In addition, our community wants to: invest in education, financial stability and children; support basic needs such as food, shelter, heat and transportation; and increase our focus on long-term strategies.