UNITED WAY OF KENTUCKY
STRATEGIC PLAN
2018-2020
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A Message from Kevin T. Middleton
President, United Way of Kentucky

Friends and fellow advocates,

“The purpose of this corporation is to build local United Way capacity and strengthen a statewide network to meet the human services needs of all Kentuckians.” – Article II, Section 1: Bylaws, United Way of Kentucky

We all have a stake in what befalls our fellow Kentuckians. We all benefit when a child succeeds in school, when someone finds a job that will help them provide for their family, or when more people are able to access quality, affordable health care. This interconnectedness is the underpinning of our society, and our work.

United Ways in Kentucky are as diverse as the Commonwealth we serve. We are urban and rural, and from small town to big city, United Way’s strength comes from a foundation of first-hand knowledge of our communities. That foundation is supported by hundreds of truly dedicated individuals, our United Way board members, volunteers and staff who live and work right next door. We are your neighbors, we raise our children here, and together with you---our communities---we invest not only our dollars, but our time and our hearts. Legislator or United Way professional, coal miner or church pastor, CEO, mommy or both, we all want to see our home towns thrive and our kids succeed!

Boards and staff together, we represent every corner of this Commonwealth---and as community leaders, each day we act on our concern for our homes and families. That’s why we are here---we exist to change lives and to improve the community conditions that affect every family and every individual across this state. And we’re good at it. Day in and day out, we foster the “collective impact” it takes to move the needle on education, financial stability, and health---the building blocks of a good life.

What other organization has the volunteer leadership, and the long-standing relationships with corporations, non-profits, faith based groups and government leaders? What other organization has the local, state and national presence we have to know and convene the right partners to address community concerns? United Way is uniquely positioned in this Commonwealth, and in this nation, to accomplish what no other organization can do, to use those relationships to be a catalyst!

Today, more than ever, we are called to serve, because when society loses its true north: it takes a force stronger than apathy, events that shake our souls, and a wellspring of courage to stand together and say “We can do better!” The work we do is about systemic change in the Commonwealth, and in our hearts; change that creates hope in the face of hopelessness and helps all Kentuckians, from the moment they are born through retirement, to see the endless possibility of a life well lived. At United Way, creating hope is why we wake up in the morning.

We know the divisiveness that stands before us, but we also know what’s at stake. The decisions that are made today, in these challenging times, will impact Kentucky’s children and families for an entire generation. We have so much to look forward to. For the first time ever, the forces of growth are aligned as the non-profit community and the business community are united in a common understanding: when we plant the seed of quality early childhood experiences, children thrive. So, together, we are aligned around and investing in strong, healthy, financially stable families, so there can only be one possible outcome – a thriving future for every Kentuckian!

We fight for these things because we know what early childhood means for a child’s chance to succeed in school, work, and life. We fight because we know it takes the foundation of financially stable, hard working, healthy families to raise our next generation.

In just one word—the foundation we’re building is called HOPE. Hope for a brighter tomorrow, and opportunity for all.
In 2016, United Way of Kentucky (UWKY) took its first steps to building a new strategy for success. The UWKY Strategic Plan is a “living document” that will grow and develop with implementation, with an ever-present emphasis on:

- supporting the state network of United Way organizations, through member services and capacity building;
- advocating for effective public policy that leads to self-sufficient, productive communities, individuals and families;
- and promoting/providing services either on the state or local level that improve education, income and health outcomes;
- in the context of building a stronger United Way state association, that is a pro-active, trusted, and visible partner to its members and other key audiences, and which is supported through diverse revenue streams, leading to long-term positive results for all stakeholders.

Every page of this document and each step of its implementation will share these common goals. We built this plan with an understanding that we serve each of our communities, from the smallest to the largest, with equal measure and sincere care.

Our mission and vision remain the same: As a focused team of leaders, United Way of Kentucky will align resources and work to advance Education, Income and Health. We envision Kentuckians united to give, advocate and volunteer to advance the common good for all.

In short, we exist to improve lives. We are grateful to join you: our members, our communities, our Commonwealth in living united for a brighter tomorrow.

Gratefully yours,

Kevin T. Middleton
President
United Way of Kentucky
UWKY entered into a direction setting process in November 2016 with Dr. Carrie Burton, Founder, Productive Learning. In March 2017, the board authorized the development of four planning committees that aligned with the results of that session. Those committees centered on Advocacy, Board Development, Communications and Financial Planning. Each of these committees met in early Summer 2017. The resulting conversations helped to form the plan at our August 2017 retreat, led by Kevin Connelly, Founding CEO, Center For Nonprofit Excellence.

We express our deepest gratitude to each committee member, as well as Dr. Carrie Burton and Kevin Connelly for their input and guidance as we look ahead to improve the capacity of UWKY to serve its membership and the citizens of Kentucky. We also express our sincere thanks to Mary Jo Bean, UWKY Board Chair (2015-2017), for her unique role in shaping this process.


Board Strategic Committee Membership

**Advocacy:**

Rosanne Nields, Board Chair  
Vice President, Planning and Government Relations  
St. Elizabeth Healthcare

Bill Farmer  
President and CEO  
United Way of the Bluegrass

Katherine McKune, Second Vice Chair  
General Counsel  
Park Community Credit Union

David Ross  
President and CEO  
United Way of the Ohio Valley

**Financial Planning:**

Mary Jo Bean, Treasurer and Past Chair  
Senior Vice President, Planning and Business Analysis  
Norton Healthcare

Debbie Hills  
President and CEO  
United Way of Southern Kentucky

Greg Jackson  
Human Resources Manager  
Marathon Petroleum Company LP

Wendell Followell  
Vice President  
Kentucky Community and Technical College System

**Board Development:**

Angie Taylor, First Vice Chair  
President  
Taylor Career Strategies, LLC

Mary-Gwynne Dougherty  
Vice President, Human Resources  
Metro United Way

**Communications:**

Megan Stith, Professionals Council Chair  
President and CEO  
United Way of Central Kentucky

Kim Sweazy  
Analyst, Corporate Communication and External Affairs  
TMMK, Toyota Motor North America

Jerri Compton  
Executive Director  
United Way of Northeast Kentucky

Special thanks also to our additional board members, United Way staff, and volunteers who have helped to shape this work, including but not limited to Doug Hogan, Stephen Heet, Matthew Hall, Tara Johnson-Noem, Mandy Hicks, Carol Bates, Margaret Hulbert, Mary Grissom, Amanda Greenwell, and so many more.

Finally, our deepest gratitude to Nicole Krider, Director of Member Services, UWKY, for her role in bringing this document and all our communications to renewed relevance, with a keen focus on audience and design.
Over the last 34 years, UWKY staff has changed, but our work to improve lives and build capacity for our local United Way communities has remained the cornerstone of the organization.

The brief timeline above gives a glimpse into just a few of the many key moments in our history. **One thread runs through it all: serving Kentucky's United Way network.**

Over the years, UWKY has weathered the many challenges that arise from a shifting operating environment and declines in economic conditions. In the present day, we face those same concerns. The organization now looks ahead, shifting from reactivity to proactive achievement, in the context of declining United Way revenues in most communities, and the turnover of more than two-thirds of local executive staff in recent years. While certain environmental factors remain unstable, such as the political climate and the conditions affecting our funding sources, we recognize that to thrive in an ever changing environment, we must operate differently.

To do so, we identified key themes upon which this plan was constructed, including:

1) Expanding the funding base for UWKY by strategically identifying new sources of revenue, and working with our members in a cooperative arrangement to attract funding for services across the Commonwealth, including the development of a "community initiatives fund" that can be accessed by local United Ways.

2) Improving communications to better convey the impact of the work being done and the reasons to invest in that work.

3) Engaging the board in a more active role to support the organization through contributions and talent, including growing the size of the board through analysis, and based on the needs of the UWKY.

4) Building on our strengths, such as: a) the United Way Born Learning Academy initiative and the model of statewide programming on which it was developed, b) our campaign funding, c) providing capacity-building information and resources that United Ways can easily customize, amplifying their local work.

Meanwhile, the needs among our twenty-two member organizations are as diverse as their range in size and funding. We commit ourselves to providing value to all, creating balance regardless of size or location, and eliminating geographic barriers, because we know that our brand is only as strong as its common message in every community.

**We return to our guiding principles as the foundational structure for this document. These principles provide titles for the four sections of this plan:**

- **Supporting the Network**
- **Effective Public Policy Advocacy**
- **Improving Lives & Strengthening Communities**
- **Building a Stronger UWKY**

With this plan we envision increased board membership and engagement, long-term financial stability, and documented common priorities among local United Ways, to better:

- Share outcome data with the public
- Improve the effectiveness of our public policy advocacy
- Create new value for local United Ways

To align our strategic direction, we used member survey data as well as structural data from our state association peers to analyze our current priorities and processes. Key areas of focus continue to center on funding local work through campaign resources, providing tools for local communities, and representing United Way among state partners.

During the August 2017 retreat, the UWKY board outlined goals through each planning committee, along with key strategies and tactics for accomplishing those goals. With this as our background, the following plan was developed over the Winter of 2017/2018.
**OUTCOME ONE**

Improved accountability, planning, and representation to active campaigns.

**Strategy 1**

UWKY will develop a dedicated campaign committee to represent the organization, and develop new opportunities for association and member funding.

**OUTCOME TWO**

UWKY provides learning opportunities to its members that increase network engagement, while providing high-quality professional development for United Way staff, leadership and board volunteers, resulting in improved local outcomes in resource development, community impact results, and advocacy.

**Strategy 1**

Re-develop high-quality in-person learning opportunities, such as the collaborative resource development capacity building training with United Ways of Tennessee, the Kentucky Professionals Council, and job-specific training supports such as the Communicators Council. Serve as an information hub for regional and national conferences, as well as partner-hosted learning opportunities throughout the Commonwealth.

**Strategy 2**

Provide robust, timely web- and phone-based learning opportunities that support topic-specific roles and activities, such as 50-minute "lunch and learns", weekly policy updates throughout the legislative session, and a pre-Live United Day advocacy training each January.

**OUTCOME THREE**

Increased brand visibility and trust across the Commonwealth. Members are provided with regularly updated customizable content that they can, with little effort, implement or disseminate in local communities. Increased local United Way engagement with UWKY.

**Strategy 1**

Develop a Member Toolkit to effectively support local objectives. This kit will feature tools for resource development, communications, impact investment, policy advocacy, board development/governance, and non-profit administration.

**Strategy 2**

Gather local United Way impact statistics and success stories to develop metrics on United Way’s value to the community. Showcase the brand through United Way successes, member news and events, public policy updates, UWW updates, relevant community impact content, upcoming dates, as well as campaign and administrative updates.

**Strategy 3**

UWKY leadership will increase engagement with the board and membership through individual face-to-face relationship building and profile development.
OUTCOME ONE
Strengthened relationships between the legislature, our members, local businesses, local non-profits, UWKY, local boards and staff

Strategy 1
Pilot and launch intimate, invite-only, regional round-table community conversations between legislators, local United Way staff and board leadership, held annually throughout the state.

Strategy 2
Develop an advocacy toolkit that provides the basics of public policy work, how to develop an advocacy effort in local communities, as well as deeper insights into priorities and the current political climate.

Strategy 3
Continue to develop the annual United Way Day at the Capitol event as the culmination of our collective policy work each year.

OUTCOME TWO
Collect local priorities and data, as well as legislator realities to shape the network advocacy agenda.

Strategy 1
Utilize regional round-table community conversations as a primary source for forming the annual advocacy agenda.

Strategy 2
Develop metrics on advocacy success using available county, state and national data sources.

Strategy 3
Provide and track network opportunities for collective advocacy.

OUTCOME THREE
Kentucky’s United Way network speaks with a common voice on legislative issues, collectively and proactively advocating for effective public policy that improves lives and strengthens communities.

Strategy 1
Develop our audiences into action teams, with targeted content for the general public, local United Ways, local boards and UWKY board leadership.

Strategy 2
Provide a train-the-trainer module for local United Ways as a component of the broader advocacy toolkit, helping to strengthen local efforts at engaging their communities in public policy work.

Strategy 3
Develop metrics and data on advocacy, including engaging the United Way network to nurture and report local outcomes, as well as results from our Day at the Capitol.
OUTCOME ONE
The Born Learning Academy Initiative is transitioned to a new funding model.

Strategy 1
Transition support to local United Ways for long-term sustainability.

Strategy 2
Produce a final report on program outcomes to determine viability for further grant funding.

OUTCOME TWO
UWKY is responsive to the needs of its customers, UWKY is positioned as a key partner in their work to improve Education, Financial Stability and Health in local communities.

Strategy 1
Strengthen relations with all member organizations through executive level conversations and a focus on the unique needs of each community.

Strategy 2
Engage the Communications and Member Services Committee in developing new ways to serve our local United Way organizations.

OUTCOME THREE
Increased awareness of local needs, data that supports grant seeking.

Strategy 1
Survey local United Ways to determine how they would use new funding to create long-term sustainable outcomes.

Strategy 2
Develop a Community Initiatives Fund that supports regional activities affecting common areas of local need.
OUTCOME ONE

UWKY will actively seek new funding sources, resulting in one or more additional revenue streams, with the goal of a balanced budget by or before the end of the plan timeline.

Strategy 1
Develop new relationships using local survey information, in search the “next Enterprise” campaign, foundation funding and more to support the network and UWKY program operations.

OUTCOME TWO

Increase revenue/in kind contributions for state support of local United Way organizations though board engagement.

Strategy 1
UWKY board members provide financial support for the organization through a meaningful contribution of their choice: either in personal investment, or through solicitation of local foundations or their employers. This support can include event sponsorships or provided in-kind services.

OUTCOME THREE

Increased administrative revenue from grant funding for support of local activities.

Strategy 1
Engage the board and staff in new fund development and sponsorship outreach, including corporate, grant and foundation investment for local and regional initiatives.

Strategy 2
Research additional grants for identified needs beyond the current period.
OUTCOME FOUR

Improved board representation from various sectors, demographics and strategic partners, to improve member services, and provide needed governance and expertise in support of UWKY staff.

Strategy 1
Reengage the Board Development Committee on an ongoing basis to focus on recruitment throughout the year and expand the size of the board to its maximum, per the UWKY bylaws.

Strategy 2
Redevelop the board profile to better understand and track board make-up and determine on-going needs, such as expanding diversity in age, gender, ethnicity, geography, and experience.

OUTCOME FIVE

Board member strengths are utilized to their full capacity, board members are informed, engaged advocates for UWKY.

Strategy 1
Succession planning is one part of effective board engagement for all members, from orientation through each member’s term, with an emphasis on participation in quarterly meetings, committees and financial planning.

Strategy 2
Board members should benefit from an ongoing series of high-quality communications that identify impact statistics and local success stories, while providing needed tools to effectively support local United Ways and UWKY.

OUTCOME SIX

UWKY operates leanly in support of local United Way organizations.

Strategy 1
UWKY creates efficiencies through cost-cutting measures and process improvement.
As a focused team of leaders, United Way of Kentucky will align resources and work to advance Education, Income and Health. We envision Kentuckians united to give, advocate and volunteer to advance the common good for all.

United Way of Kentucky
P.O. Box 4653, Louisville, KY  40204
kevin.middleton@uwky.org • nicole.krider@uwky.org
502.589.6897 • www.uwky.org

Facebook: UnitedWayKentucky
Twitter: UWofKentucky