



FREEDOM

TO RISE



United Way Suncoast's Commitment to Equity For Biennial Board Review: May 2021-May 2023

Organizational Equity Statement:

United Way Suncoast (UWS) has a long history of commitment and proudly values serving every person in our community. As an anti-racism organization, we vow to purposefully identify, discuss, and challenge all factors of inequity and the impact(s) they have on our organization, its systems, its people, and our community. We recognize that diversity and inclusion gains will not be sustained unless our community promotes and encourages new ways of problem-solving and diversity of thought. We advocate for diverse, equitable, and inclusive practices that unite, rather than divide, our community providing all the freedom to rise because United We Rise, United We Win.

Definitions

Equity: The intentional inclusion of everyone in society. Equity is achieved when systemic, institutional, and historical barriers based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other identities are dismantled and no longer predict socioeconomic, education and health outcomes.

Diversity: Each individual is unique, and groups of individuals reflect multiple dimensions of difference including race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity and expression, disability, sexual orientation, veteran-status, familial status, residency status, socioeconomic status, mental health status, or geographical representation.

Inclusion: The value and practice of creating cultures of support and belonging in which everyone's input is valued by the whole (group, organization, society, etc.), particularly regarding decisions that affect their lives, and in which people do their best work and are respected and honored for who they are.

Racism: Prejudice which is supported by social, institutional, and economic power. Racism manifests itself on several levels, including internally through bigotry and implicit bias, institutionally through outcome disparities, and culturally through historically racist policies and practices.

Community Commitments:

- United Way Suncoast stands against all forms of discrimination, racism, and injustice. We work to ensure that every person in our community has equitable opportunities to reach their full potential.
- We affirm explicitly and with united solidarity our identity as an anti-racism organization.
- United Way Suncoast believes that every person, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or religion is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect.
- United Way Suncoast commits to community change by rallying non-profits, corporations, and government to work together to address, explore, and examine implicit bias and systemic advantage/oppression such to remove barriers.
- United Way Suncoast will continue to research, develop, and implement strategies and best practices that dismantle racism and ethnic oppression within all aspects of our community and society including the removal of barriers to quality education and financial stability to all.
- United Way Suncoast values work derived from and delivered within our communities- establishing resource centers, programs, and opportunities in diverse neighborhoods to provide access to job opportunities, legal assistance, and resources to assist families in building a greater future for themselves and future generations.
- United Way Suncoast is devoted to learning, a willingness to evolve, and expand these commitments as we lead the journey for equitable Suncoast community change.



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Team and Board Member Commitments

- All team and board members are expected to exhibit conduct that reflects inclusion.
- All team and board members are strongly encouraged and expected to have cultural competency training to enhance their knowledge of diverse perspectives and community.
- Any team or board member found to have exhibited any inappropriate conduct or behavior against others may be subject to disciplinary action or removed from United Way Suncoast programming.

Leading with Equity

A brief reflection on how UWS has invested in our Commitment to Equity in the Suncoast:

- United Way Suncoast invested a total of \$5.1MM in either direct or indirect investments in strategic community partners, supporting programs or interventions that promote basic needs, income/financial stability equity, education equity and social justice in targeted diverse and underrepresented communities.
 - \$2.9MM or almost 50% of the total community impact investment dollars were invested in directly in these impact pillars.
- Throughout its five-county Suncoast region, UWS's leadership hold positions or memberships in public, private, and community organizations that promote and advocate anti-racism and equity.
- United Way Suncoast spent a total of \$1.4MM in support of our targeted place-based neighborhood centers, home to a large percentage of underrepresented and ALICE families in Sulphur Springs, Campbell Park, and North Greenwood.
- In 2019 and 2020, as a component of UWS's The Big Plan Initiative in Manatee County, UWS opened Reading Rooms at La Mirada Apartment complex and Bradenton Village that are home to a high percentage of ALICE families that are of Hispanic decent, many with limited proficiency in English with Spanish being their native language. UWS invests in early learning specialist team members on site that are bilingual and biliterate.
- Early Learning Initiatives include culturally relevant components in programming, communications, and materials to expand the programs' reach to as many residents and children as possible.
- In partnership with the IRS, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) aims to support residents with disabilities including supporting a contracted American Sign Language interpreter and virtual appointments for residents who experience challenges with access reliable transportation.
- UWS expanded accessibility of our website by adding Spanish and Haitian Creole languages to its communications.
- UWS is a funding and research partner of the Tampa Bay Partnership's 2020 Racial Equity report and 2019 Unite Pinellas' Equity Profile of Pinellas County.
- UWS invested and continues to invest in internal trainings for team members, board members, and volunteers to develop baseline understanding of equity within the workplace and within the context of UWS' Community Impact work.
- UWS mobilized several team members to engage in Courageous Conversations with the Foundation of Healthy St. Petersburg's Center for Health Equity.
- United Way Suncoast supports advocacy through public policy related issues surrounding these focus areas.
 - In 2020, UWS published a white paper stressing the Suncoast's present and future housing needs and a pending eviction crisis worsened by the pandemic.
 - UWS's Public Policy Committee's Equity Statement: UWS' Public Policy Committee creates a space where all perspectives are considered, and all voices are heard. We are representative of the diversity in our community and embrace inclusion as a guiding value for our advocacy efforts.