



2023 - 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Members of the Community,

In November 2023, United Way of Kern County proudly rebranded as **United Way of Central Eastern California**, expanding our reach to serve the vibrant communities of **Kern, Inyo, Mono, and Northern San Bernardino counties**. I am pleased to announce that as of November 2024, we have further strengthened our commitment by opening our second office in Bishop, California. This new location will soon provide essential resources to individuals experiencing homelessness and those at risk of losing their homes through the Cal-AIM program.



At United Way, our mission remains steadfast: to address the most pressing needs of our community through our core pillars of **Health, Education, and Economic Resilience**. We are proud to continue offering vital services such as the **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)** program through our Economic Resilience Department, **Family Life Education** through our Education Department, and **homelessness assistance and housing navigation** services through our Health Department.

In addition, we recognize the importance of disaster relief and recovery in our ongoing work to support the community. In 2024, the devastating Borel Fire caused significant damage, destroying nearly 100 homes and devastating the town of Havilah in the Kern River Valley.



Thanks to the collaboration with the Kern County Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) and a

network of dedicated volunteers, nonprofits, and first responders, United Way was able to assist dozens of affected residents with immediate gas, food, and shelter needs.

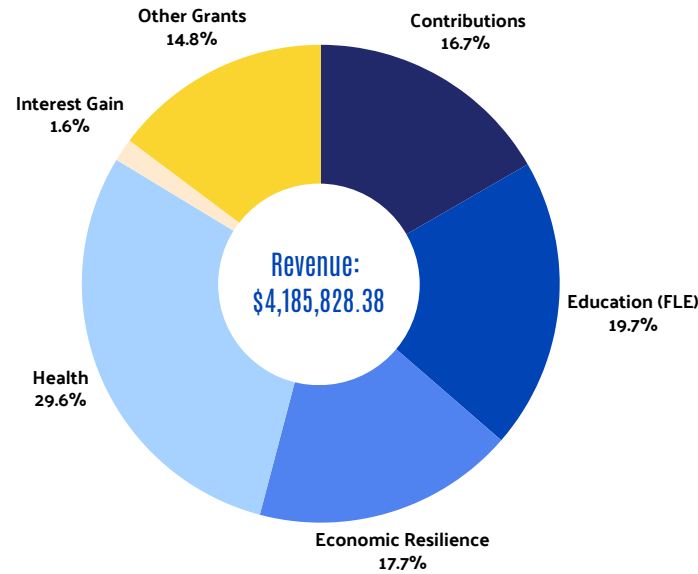
As we move forward, we are deeply grateful for your continued support. Together, we are building a more inclusive, equitable, and just society. Let us remain **united** in our efforts to empower individuals, strengthen communities, and shape a brighter future for all.

Sincerely,

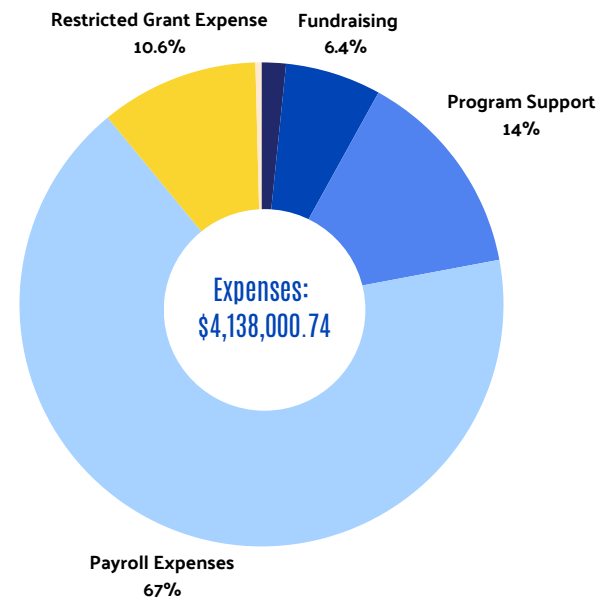
Eric Arias

Eric Arias
President & CEO
United Way of Central Eastern California

Organizational Revenues



Organizational Expenditures



United Way of Central Eastern California
now serves Kern, Mono, Inyo, and
Northern San Bernardino.



Follow our
social media!



DONORS

\$75,000+

PCL Industrial Services

\$20,000 - \$34,999:

Kaiser Permanente
Target Corporation

\$35,000 - \$74,999:

Galeres
Costco Wholesale
County of Kern
US Bank

\$15,000 - \$19,999:

California Resources Corporation
Chevron
Dollar General
Kern Health Systems

Thank you for
helping us raise
\$2,258,925.28

GRANTS & CONTRACTS

*Aera Energy
Bakersfield City School District
California Department of Health Care Services
California Housing & Community Development
Chevron
Citizens Bank
City of Bakersfield
Community Action Partnership of Kern
County/Internal Revenue Service
Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF)
Cummins Inc.
Dollar Energy Fund
Emergency Food & Shelter Program
Employment Development Department*

*Keith Campbell Foundation
Kern Community Foundation
Kern Health Systems
Lamont Elementary School District
LISTOS CA
Planned Parenthood Mar Monte
The Center at Sierra Health
United States Department of Agriculture
United Way Worldwide
United Ways of California
US Bank
Virginia & Alfred Harrell
Wonderful College Prep Academy
Wonderful Company*

2023/2024 IMPACT

WHO WE ARE

Since 1963, United Way of Central Eastern California has been dedicated to serve the needs of the community.

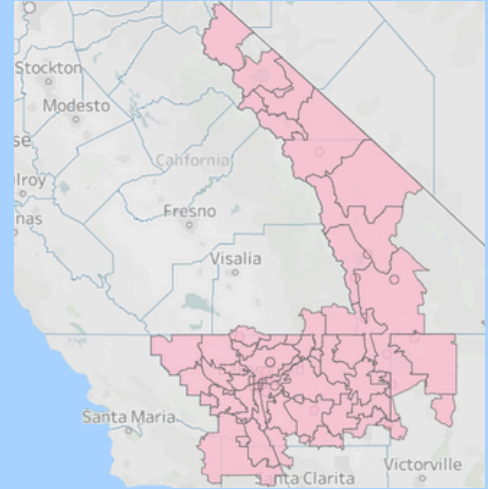
MISSION

United Way of Central Eastern California leads a movement to uplift our communities through education, health, and economic resilience. We deliver programs and services to enhance the lives of residents we serve within the counties of Kern, Inyo, Mono, and northern San Bernardino. We bring donors, volunteers, advocates, and other stakeholders together to build powerful and sustainable coalitions and partnerships.

VISION

We at United Way are transforming lives to create stronger, more resilient, and equitable communities where everyone thrives.

Who We Serve



4

Counties

40,000

Individuals Served

14

Cities

20

Programs & Events

OUR INITIATIVES



Health

We first developed our education department to help prevent children from falling behind in their reading proficiency. As our early literacy programs extended, so did our realization that there are other factors at play that can impact a child's education.



Education

UWCEC recognizes that health involves more than diet, clean air, and exercise. Challenges like high healthcare costs, inadequate home cooling or heating, and housing instability can harm families' well-being. To address this, our programs and partnerships to support local residents.



Economic Resilience

Families are walking a financial tight rope with no ability to save for college, housing, or retirement. That is why United Way of Central Eastern California is actively working to help these families overcome their financial hardships.



Dolly Parton Imagination Library Partnership

In partnership with the Kern Literacy Council and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, we're kindling a lifelong love for reading in our youngest residents.



Introducing our new UWCEC Board Chair: Joe Garcia

On October 2024, we welcomed, UWCEC Board Member, Joey Garcia as Board Chair for the UWCEC Board of Directors.



Mari Pérez-Dowling Joins United Way Worldwide

Congratulations to Mari for her appointment as the new Vice President of Government Partnerships, GGRF at United Way Worldwide!

United for Health

United Way of Central Eastern California recognizes that health involves more than diet, clean air, and exercise. Challenges like high healthcare costs, inadequate home cooling or heating, and housing instability can harm families' well-being. To address this, UWCEC develops programs and partnerships to support local residents.



CAL-AIM

The CA PATH CITED Community Supports program is a vital initiative aimed at addressing housing instability in our community. UWCEC is working to establish key partnerships within Kern, Inyo, and Mono counties to ensure a successful launch of our 2 Community Supports services in early 2025. Through strategic planning, partnerships, and comprehensive services, we will work to ensure that individuals not only find housing but maintain it over the long term, ultimately fostering healthier and more resilient communities.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

We have expanded our homeless prevention and diversion efforts through the Housing and Homeless Incentive Program (HHIP) designed to reduce and/or prevent homelessness. In partnership with Kern Family Health Care, UWCEC offered rent and/or utility assistance to individuals and families who have past-due balances and are at risk of experiencing homelessness or termination of utility services.

- **Rental Assistance: Served 41 clients between July - December 2023, totaling \$84,154.37 in rental assistance.**
- **Utility Assistance: Served 69 clients between August - December 2023, totaling \$51,628.75 in utility assistance**

HEALTHY MINDS, HEALTHY BODIES

One of UWCEC's main pillars is health. Our Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies (HMHB) initiative provides food, books, and dental hygiene kits to low-income children and families. Currently, two of the most significant issues in Kern County are literacy and hunger, and these events address both. Access to basic needs is essential for building healthy communities. Thank you to our HMHB partners for making these events possible.

2512

Books

3,475

Food Boxes

1,685

COVID-19 Tests

5,150

Masks

533

Dental Kits

301

Hand Sanitizers



**HEALTHY MINDS
HEALTHY BODIES**

Food and Book Distribution



United for Education

United Way of Central Eastern California (UWCEC) first developed our education department to help prevent children from falling behind in their reading proficiency. As our early literacy programs extended, so did our realization that there are other factors at play that can negatively impact a child's education.



- 45 Books
- 45 Book bags
- 28 Picaso Tiles
- 4 Kern County Sites

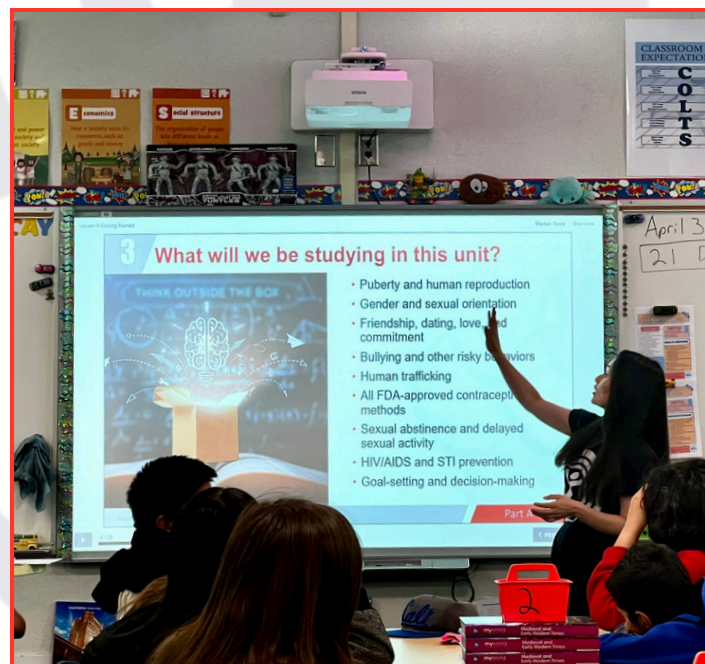
RAISING A READER

The **Raising a Reader** program promotes early literacy by encouraging shared book-reading between children (birth to age 8) and their families. It provides rotating collections of quality books and teaches parents effective reading techniques to build literacy skills and foster a love of reading. By partnering with schools and community groups, the program helps prepare children for academic success and lifelong learning.

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

Family Life Education is actively engaged in **15 local schools**, collaborating with **three school districts** to provide valuable educational programs. Through these efforts, the organization reaches and teaches over **5,000 students annually**, enhancing their growth as young adults in our community.

Our educators cover a wide range of important topics, including **bullying, sexual harassment, human trafficking, pregnancy, and STI prevention**, among others. Additionally, they connect students with local and national resources, equipping them with essential knowledge and support to navigate life's challenges.



Partnership with Dolly Parton Imagination Library

UWCEC's literacy initiatives target low to moderate income families. Kids succeed in school when they have books at home and parents or adults who read with them. Each month, we distribute books to more than **600** young children (and counting!) along with other important resources to help their families thrive.

In partnership with the Kern Literacy Council and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, we're kindling a lifelong love for reading in our youngest residents. The DPIL initiative provides free, age-appropriate books to children from birth to age five, regardless of their family's income.



"This program transformed our family time; my children are excited to read every night, and I feel confident helping them grow a love for books. Thank you for creating this opportunity."

-Gaby A.

BOOK DISTRIBUTIONS

- 4,585 Books - READ United
- 200 Home Libraries
- 45 Raising A Reader
- 1,079 Outreach
- 2,512 HMHB
- 200 Enrolled DPIL

3B'S - BOOK, BEAR, & BLANKET

- 238 Sets



BACK-TO-SCHOOL

- 825 Backpacks
- 1,221 Pencil Pouches -
Pencil, Pencil Eraser,
Sharpener, Ruler,
Crayons, Scissors

HYGIENE DISTRIBUTION

- 4 pantries locations
- 523 Total Kits
- 723 Dental Floss,
Toothpaste, Toothbrush,
Wash Cloth, Soap,
Shampoo, & Deodorant
- 583 Feminine Products
- 480 Toothbrush & Soap
Containers



VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE

The VITA Program is a **free income tax** assistance program that grants low to moderate income families and single individuals the alternative of not having to pay for such an expensive service, while still receiving quality work. Thanks to the Kern VITA Partnership that consists of multiple agencies, and the help of over **50** dedicated volunteers, we are able to provide this free service to our families.

- **2,889** tax returns filed
- **\$6,015,417** in refunds issued
- **282** ITIN filers
- **22** VITA sites
- **30** certified VITA volunteers
- **17** mobile sites/partnerships

FINANCIAL LITERACY WORKSHOPS

Through Financial Literacy Workshops, UWCEC equips young adults with essential financial literacy skills and the confidence they need to succeed in the professional world. Financial literacy is **vital** to the future of our community, and we are committed to supporting our future leaders.

- **49** Students
- **\$24,500** in scholarships awarded
- **4 Partners:** US Bank, Citizens Business Bank, Tri Counties Bank, and Y2L.



FARMWORKER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

The farmworker advancement program aims to provide employment based training and educational opportunities to farmworkers and their immediate family members by partnering with local trade union and workforce development partners.



INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Our nonprofit internship program offers a unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience while contributing to meaningful projects. As an intern, you'll collaborate with a dedicated team, develop valuable skills in program **development**, **fundraising**, and **community outreach**, and make a lasting impact.

A total of **29 interns** graduated during the 18 months:

- Bakersfield College = 10
- San Joaquin Valley College = 9
- Kern Community Foundation = 4
- Bakersfield ARC = 1
- Kern High School District = 2
- No agency = 3



RIDE UNITED

527 Lyft rides completed, with a total grant amount of **\$9,688.08**

PG&E REACH

2,402 applications processed, **2,346** granted, totaling **\$2,021,837** awarded

PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE

For 33 years United Way of Central Eastern California has hosted a conference for members and volunteers of nonprofit organizations. The event allows individuals to network, share plans, and collaborate to better serve the community and make a positive impact where they live.



TEDDY BEAR TOSS

UWCEC has participated in the Annual Teddy Bear Toss the last **26 years**. Contributions benefit local charities and organizations that serve children in need. Over 60 agencies volunteered to sort the stuffed animals which were then distributed to **7,084 children**.



ARTS & CULTURE INITIATIVE

In partnership with Lotus Bakersfield Corp, we were able to move forward with the 3rd Annual Festival Del Mariachi Workshops. This project aims to provide students the opportunity to learn music from world-renowned talent and foster their appreciation for the arts and heritage.



CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

United Way of Central Eastern California is honored to participate in the Kern River Charity Classic Golf Tournament. This is an annual event that celebrates the positive impact we are making in the community we serve. The spring fundraiser welcomes a refreshing way to raise and uplift our initiatives and programs.





CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF SERVICE TO KERN COUNTY

On **November 4, 2023**, United Way of Central Eastern California celebrated an extraordinary milestone of six decades of unwavering dedication to community service and the pursuit of a brighter, more resilient future!

The **60th Anniversary Celebration and Gala** commemorated 60 years of transformative impact, purpose, and positive change. The event also recognized community organizations and individuals who played a key role in United Way's mission and vision for the last six decades.

It was during this anniversary event that we introduced our new name to the community. United Way of Kern County became **United Way of Central Eastern California**. Our decision to rebrand aligns our identity with our broader vision, values, and the diverse range of initiatives we have undertaken over the years. United Way of Central Eastern California better represents our comprehensive approach and our focus on serving the counties of **Kern, Mono, Inyo, Northern San Bernardino, and Indian Wells Valley**.



United for Havilah | Borel Fire Relief Effort

United Way of Central Eastern California is dedicated to providing critical relief and support to victims of natural disasters, including those affected by the devastating Borel Fire that began on July 26, 2024. In just 24 hours, the fire scorched over 59,000 acres and destroyed the town of Havilah, leaving countless lives shattered and Havilah's history erased. In times of crisis, every contribution counts. Your generous donations enable us to deliver essential resources to those affected by the catastrophic event. Together, we can bring hope, resilience, and recovery to those who need it most. Join us in making a tangible difference. Donate now to help us restore lives and strengthen communities in the aftermath of the Borel Fire. **The amount we have offered in emergency assistance has been over \$40,000.**



\$14,000+

in gas and grocery gift cards

150

Blankets & Beanies

10

Air Fryers & Cooking Sets

150

Scarves

150

Pairs of Socks

150

Pairs of Gloves

75

Hygiene Kits

75

Pies



UNITED WAY
Central Eastern
California

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

Joe Garcia | Chair
VP, Business Development
Manager III
Tri-Counties Bank

Matt Rogers | Past Chair
Manager
UPS Stockdale Operations

Sandeep Singh Malhi | Vice Chair
Sergeant
Bakersfield Police Department

Jordan Kaufman | Treasurer
Treasurer & Tax Collector
County of Kern

Antonio Lozano | Secretary
CEO
San Joaquin Operators LLC

Members

Dr. Timothy Fulenwider
Executive Director of Instructional
Support Services Division
Bakersfield City School District

Dr. Jessica Grimes
Executive Director
Employment Training Panel

Ana Montenegro
Director of Operations
California Resources Operation

Emily Duran
Chief Executive Officer
Kern Health Systems

Endee Grijalva
Program Director
Kern Community College District

KEEP CONNECTED

We invite you to follow us on social media for timely updates and insights into our ongoing work within the communities we serve.



UNITED WAY
Central Eastern
California

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