



## 2022-2024 Program Descriptions and Grant Amounts

*The agencies and programs listed below make up the approximately \$1.7 million in program funding that United Way granted in central Massachusetts this year. You will notice that each of the programs are working to provide services in one or more of the basic building blocks for a good life: racial equity, education, health, and family stability; our Women's Initiative focusing on adolescent girls; or are helping the most vulnerable among us with immediate needs such as food, housing, and crisis intervention through our Safety Net funding.*

### **African Community Education Program (ACE) - After School Program**

The African Community Education After School Program provides academic and social-emotional support to African refugee and immigrant students in grades 5-12 who attend Worcester Public Schools (WPS). The program helps students transition into WPS, learn study skills and foundational material, complete their homework, catch up to grade level and graduate. The program includes tutoring, homework help and enrichment activities.

### **African Community Education Program (ACE) - Express Yourself (Women's Initiative)**

The African Community Education Express Yourself Program for Girls uses a group mentoring model to engage and empower African refugee and immigrant girls who live in Worcester. As a part of an AfterSchool Program and Saturday Program, facilitators lead the girls in small group discussions, games, and hands-on activities to learn about conflict resolution, healthy relationships, positive behavior, and selfadvocacy. The girls also learn about community service and participate in a community service project.

### **African Community Education Program (ACE) - Family Outreach Program**

The African Community Education Family Outreach Program serves African refugee and immigrant families who have resettled in Worcester in recent years, and who need help navigating their new community's cultural norms, rules, and systems. The goal is to teach parents step-by-step how to handle challenges themselves and empower them to be self-sufficient. Crisis intervention for clients facing eviction, serious health issues and other emergencies is also provided.

### **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central MA/Metrowest - Making a BIG Difference in Worcester**

Through participation in professionally supported and developed mentoring relationships, at-risk youth in the Worcester area develop critical competencies they need to become healthy, caring, and responsible adults. To reach the most children in need, these services are provided at local schools, youth serving organizations, and in the community.

### **Boys and Girls Club of Worcester - CARE Program: Committed Allies Reach for Equity**

The CARE Program helps youth and families recover from the COVID crisis by providing food access, free meals, classroom access and tutoring, and youth development programming. Due the school year, the learning hub provides remote access to virtual classrooms and homework help, and evening teen programs. After school year ends, the focus will be on assisting kids to recover from the effects of the pandemic, helping them with issues such as learning loss, family instability (health, jobs, food/shelter), and abandonment issues.

### **Boys and Girls Club of Worcester – Girls Voice (Women’s Initiative)**

Girls Voice is a multi-front curriculum for middle-school-aged girls ("Voicers") that includes three main components: 1. once-weekly SMART Girls or Girls Circle curriculum, offered in alternating 10-week courses; 2. once-weekly leadership club in which girls choose their own volunteer and fundraising projects, use parliamentary procedure while learning to assert themselves calmly, plan, allocate tasks, work together for a common goal, and analyze the results themselves; 3. one other girls-only activity per week, such as dance classes, drama club, or girl’s fitness, that reinforce lessons of self-discipline, teamwork, and "talking it out."

### **CASA Project, Inc. - Child Court Advocacy Program**

The Child Court Advocacy program provides volunteer advocates for abused and neglected children in Worcester County Juvenile Court. With strong support from the Worcester County Juvenile Court, CASA volunteers perform investigations for the judge, monitor case progress, and advocate for the child, in order to find a safe and permanent home as quickly as possible.

### **Catholic Charities - Emergency Services & Homeless Prevention Program**

This program helps people in crisis: preventing hunger, homelessness, destabilization, and despair. The program provides food, clothing, personal items, infant supplies, as well as financial assistance with rent, mortgages, utilities, transportation, prescription assistance, and other basic needs as resources allow. The primary program goals are to help stabilize the crisis situation, promote self-sufficiency, and foster hope.

### **Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance - Housing Counseling and Homelessness Prevention**

The Housing Counseling program works to prevent homelessness and to promote safe, stable, and affordable housing ensuring tenants can sustain their housing long-term. Services include homelessness prevention and housing stabilization. To accomplish this goal, the program services include ongoing case management, counseling and mediation regarding landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities, education, referrals to additional community services, and emergency payments for rental, mortgage, and utility arrearages.

### **Children's Friend, Inc. - The Dialectical Behavioral Therapy Program**

The Ellsworth Child and Family Mental Health Clinic offers outpatient mental health services to children, adolescents, and their families. The program utilizes individual therapy, group therapy, telephone consultation, and team meetings to provide a Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) approach to adolescents and young adults ages 13 to 21 who have a history of self-injury (e.g., cutting or burning) or suicidal thoughts/attempts. The goal of this program is to eliminate suicidal ideation and self-injurious behaviors in these adolescents and young adults to move them from crisis to stability.

### **Community Healthlink, Inc. - Support for Success: School Based Mental Health Services**

Support for Success provides a comprehensive system of school based behavioral health supports embedded in 11 schools in Central Massachusetts to at risk students. Each school is assigned a masters level clinician who provides counseling, consultation, and training. Experience shows that providing an accessible treatment service, by embedding clinicians in schools, helps create a learning support system in the school in which at-risk students are more successful and educational outcomes improve.

### **Community Legal Aid - Legal Advocacy and Protection Program**

The Legal Advocacy and Protection Project enforces the legal rights of Worcester County's low-income and elderly families and individuals who need the protection of the legal system to remain safe or to gain access to the shelter, income, and benefits programs that will move them out of crisis and help stabilize their lives. Through its work, the program eliminates barriers to rights guaranteed by state and federal law by ensuring that agencies administering benefits and shelter programs follow the law and by ensuring that courts apply the law correctly. Simply put, Worcester County's most vulnerable residents need expert legal help to navigate the complex systems that can stabilize and improve their lives.

### **Creative Hub Worcester – Creative Hub After School Program**

95% of families whose children attend Creative Hub After School qualify as low-income/poverty level, and don't have access to safe out of school time programs for their children. The purpose of this request is to fund full scholarships for the families that can't afford private pay tuition, and do not qualify for state childcare vouchers. We have identified this serious gap in service, and these are some of our most vulnerable youth for this reason. If they do not attend after school, their caregivers cannot work and support their household.

### **Dismas House - Community Response for Formerly Incarcerated**

The Dismas model begins with the interviewing of prospective program candidates in prisons and shelters as well as on the streets. While participating in the Dismas program, residents are part of a family-style atmosphere and benefit from a network of resources specifically geared to assist them with recovery services and mental health support, civil legal problems, health benefits acquisition, SSI/SSDI benefits acquisition, credit repair, job and college searches, and housing referrals and placement.

### **Elder Services of Worcester Area - Money Management**

The Money Management Program provides financial stability and freedom from financial exploitation for elders living in Worcester and surrounding towns. This is accomplished through two components, Bill Payer and Representative Payee. The goal of the program is financial stability that will allow an elder to remain in their own home for as long as possible.

### **Elder Services of Worcester Area - Nutrition Program**

The Nutrition Program addresses multiple problems faced by elders, ranging from poor nutrition and food insecurity to chronic disease and social isolation. Nutrition services and meals are a vital support that enables many elders to live in the community independently. The Meals-on-Wheels Program offers reassurance to its consumers and their families that someone is checking on their well-being; while the congregate dining program offers opportunities for socialization, recreation, and educational programming.

### **Family Health Center of Worcester, Inc. - Positive Directions**

Positive Directions (PD) is a strengths-based program that supports at-risk youth to succeed and graduate from high school. PD supports healthy youth development by addressing three distinct risk factors: behavioral/mental health issues, academic failure, and poor school attendance. For dropout prevention efforts to have the best opportunity for success, they need to be implemented early and consistently. PD does this by engaging and enrolling rising 9th graders identified by teachers and guidance counselors as at-risk for disengagement and dropping out of school. Over a decade of results have proven the program works, resulting in higher graduation rates for PD students than the overall graduation rates at South and in the Worcester Public Schools.

### **Family Services of Central Massachusetts - Summer Literacy Initiative**

Working with over nine agencies in the City of Worcester and their respective summer camp programs that target low-income and racially diverse children in grades 1 through 4, the SLI coaching model and collaborative enrichment approach helps to combat summer learning loss. Certified elementary school teachers are assigned as "Literacy Coaches" to work with each camp on literacy curriculum, activities with literacy content, and materials. Coaches use a variety of effective educational methods to support literacy including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The aim of SLI is to support children to achieve grade level reading by grade 3; a transition from "Learn to Read" to "Read to Learn."

### **Friendly House, Inc. - Social Service Program**

Friendly House's Social Service Program's purpose is to stabilize families through the following services: providing crisis intervention, financial and legal protective services, shelter and housing services, and emergency food to families with the goal of stabilizing the family by meeting their immediate needs.

### **Girls Inc - Community Based Programs (Women's Initiative)**

Girls Inc. supports under-resourced girls in grades K-12 with critical academic enrichment, health/wellness, and life skills development learning opportunities. #GirlsWorld is a violence prevention outreach program that teaches girls about conflict prevention and resolution, healthy relationships, substance-abuse prevention, media literacy and economic literacy.

### **Girl Scouts of Central and Western MA – All About MEdia (Women's Initiative)**

All About MEdia is a new program proposed by the Girl Scouts of Central and Western MA. This is an 8 week program which focuses on social media, healthy relationships, online safety, cyber bullying, and consequences. The curriculum was developed by a collaboration between the Girl Scouts, Girls Inc, and YWCA.

### **Guild of St. Agnes - Infant-Toddler Early Education & Care**

The Guild of St. Agnes Infant/Toddler program provides children with a developmentally appropriate learning environment while offering parents full-day, year-round childcare services in a safe setting. The program is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and accredited by the National Association of Early Education and Care (NAEYC). In addition to the curriculum, the program provides comprehensive services including transportation, meals, and behavioral health services and/or referrals.

### **Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester - Literacy Academy: ESOL for Career Readiness**

Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester provides adults with the English language skills they need to thrive in our community. By providing several subject-intensive language courses for refugees and immigrant students, the program allows students to develop their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills while pursuing personal and career goals.

### **LUK Crisis Center – Project Shine (Women’s Initiative)**

Project Shine is a unique leadership development program for middle school age girls (ages 10-14) in Central Massachusetts. The goal of Project Shine is to reduce violence among "tween" girls by supporting their development of essential life skills that foster self-efficacy, leadership, and healthy relationships. Through Project Shine, LUK engages girls in a positive youth development program that combines multiple interventions to build resiliency, positive self-image, and confidence; cultivate healthy connections and peer relationships; enhance personal and collective strengths; encourage community service; prevent risky behaviors; and develop leadership and self-advocacy skills as well as resources to increase their safety.

### **Nativity School of Worcester - Graduate Support Program**

Nativity Worcester is committed to the success of its students not only in middle school, but in high school and college as well. Working in conjunction with our graduates’ high school guidance counselors, Nativity Worcester’s Office of Graduate Support provides a comprehensive support system throughout the high school and college years.

### **Net of Compassion - Outreach and Shelter for Worcester's Homeless**

Net of Compassion (NOC) is dedicated to bringing support to homeless and at-risk people on the streets of Worcester. NOC strives to meet each individual where he or she is in their struggle, building trust, offering support, assistance, and hope in rebuilding lives. This is done through a weekly feeding program, street outreach, peer counseling and recovery supports, and shelter. The funds allow NOC to augment compassionate wrap around services for an extremely vulnerable population, with a warm meal, safe bed, and a hot shower during the daytime hour. NOC operates the only shower facility in the city of Worcester currently open to the homeless.

### **Open Sky Services - Safe Homes**

Safe Homes provides a comprehensive range of culturally responsive services for over 200 LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex, asexual) youth ages 14-23, their families and allies in Central Mass. We work to reduce risks and increase protective factors for these youth during middle school, high school and young adulthood via advocacy and intervention; free mental health counseling; diverse educational programs and workshops for LGBTQIA+ youth, their families, and allies; homelessness prevention services; emergency and safety net services such as a food pantry and a transgender clothing closet; mentoring; family supports; Peer Leadership training.

### **Pernet Family Health Service, Inc. - Emergency Assistance**

The goal of the Emergency Assistance Program is to help stabilize vulnerable, low-income families who find themselves unable to meet their most basic needs for food and necessities. The program provides fresh, frozen, and packaged foods for children and adults, and age-appropriate infant formula and diapers to alleviate emergency situations. Once the most basic of needs are met, families can then begin to reach self-sufficiency by accessing case management, connecting with local, state, and federal resources in addition to other Pernet programs.

### **Rainbow Child Development Center - Rainbow's Preschool**

Rainbow Child Development Center's licensed and nationally accredited Preschool Program serves 53 children, ages 2.9-6, in 4 classrooms. The program's curriculum is interactive and child-centered, offering each child the chance to explore and learn in a supportive non-judgmental forum. Speech development therapy, play therapy, assessments, and individual and group counseling are provided on site. Two teachers, aided by interns and volunteers, direct each classroom. Breakfast, lunch, and snack are provided as well as transportation for children whose families are unable to transport their child.

### **Rainbow Child Development Center - Rainbow's School Age Program**

This program serves 91 children between the ages of five up to 13 years old in three locations: Belmont Community School, City View School and at 10 Edward Street 52 weeks a year. The program focuses on providing an enriched, stimulating curriculum with an emphasis on homework, academic assistance, and mental health. Twelve-month program offerings are age appropriate and include academic support, nutrition, mental health programs, science, exercise, art, and literacy.

### **Regional Environmental Council - Food Justice Program**

The Food Justice Program consists of three major initiatives: a network of community & school gardens and urban farms (UGROW), youth development and employment through urban agriculture (YouthGROW), and farmers' markets and mobile markets bringing healthy, affordable, local food to food insecure neighborhoods (REC Community Farmers Markets). These programs are designed to work together to address the 4 primary obstacles to healthy food access: Price (too expensive), Proximity (too far), Education (the whys and hows of healthy growing, shopping, cooking, eating) and Empowerment (enabling grassroots decision-making and ownership, promoting cultural relevancy, and self-sufficiency).

### **Seven Hills Foundation – Just Us Girls (Women's Initiative)**

Just Us Girls is a unique social growth and development program for girls with special needs offered through Seven Hills. It helps girls with special needs form real friendships and acquire the social skills needed to form healthy and lasting relationships with their peers, something their disabilities have made difficult. The program also provides them with other important skills that empower them to lead healthy, safe, and confident lives. Using evidence-based curricula, this dynamic group program offers adolescent and teen girls access to fun and creative ways of learning social growth and development skills. By "building, strengthening and supporting the development of healthy, confident and safe adolescent girls" with special needs, Just Us Girls helps reduce the incidence of bullying and violence against this particularly vulnerable population of girls in central Massachusetts.

### **South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) - Greater Worcester Housing Connection - Triage & Assessment Center**

The Greater Worcester Housing Connection (GWHC) serves as an emergency safety net program for single adult men and women experiencing homelessness in Worcester and Worcester county. The GWHC provides overnight accommodations, meals, case management services, referrals to community-based services, and housing placement.

### **Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Massachusetts – Girls Youth Effect Program (Women’s Initiative)**

The Girls Youth Effect Program is a gender-focused initiative to meet the severe lack of culturally responsive programs for Asian girls in the Worcester community, including targeted efforts to recruit new Afghani refugee girls. Girls Youth Effect will support girls’ empowerment through leadership by using the One Circle curriculum.

### **Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Massachusetts – Global Community**

SEACMA will offer the Global Community (GC) program, a comprehensive support program, to new immigrant, refugee, and asylee communities in Greater Worcester; SEACMA expects to serve 500 individuals annually. SEACMA will provide a gathering place for new communities; support cultural activities; connect individuals and families to community services and SEACMA programs (e.g., ESL, work readiness, health and wellness education, mental health supports, etc.); and encourage connection to the Greater Worcester community through community service.

### **The Shine Initiative - Mindmatters**

Mindmatters is designed for middle and high school youth and the adults who most influence them (teachers and parents/guardians). Mindmatters includes educational workshops and summits, training sessions, a free app, a soon-to-launch texting program, and Mindmatters teams. These teams are year round, school-based (or youth organization-based) clubs of middle and high school students working on mental health awareness, outreach, and advocacy within their community.

### **Webster Square Day Care Center - Preschool Child Care**

Webster Square Day Care Center is a comprehensive multi-service early education and care organization comprised of a center-based preschool and a family childcare system. The preschool program offers daily learning experiences in 11 areas of child development along with speech/language therapy, motor development and play therapy, all on site.

### **Worcester Community Action Council - Financial Empowerment**

Moving out of poverty is a complex, multi-year process that looks different for everyone. One component that is usually present, however, is that ongoing stress compromises the planning and organizing skills necessary for success, and many clients facing economic hardship lack the support to focus on the long-term and larger picture while navigating their urgent, short-term needs. The Financial Empowerment program services include budgeting/money management; debt counseling; tax filing; banking, saving, and/or a matched savings program; and credit repair.

### **Worcester Jewish Community Center – Worcester Girls United (Women’s Initiative)**

Worcester Girls United (WGU) is a year-round program for girls ages 10-14 from diverse racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds to assist and empower girls. Focusing on health and healthy relationships, career readiness, financial literacy, and personal safety, participants will become a cohesive cohort to support one another. WGU nurtures positive peer relationships, build community spirit, and help promote health, well-being, confidence, and personal safety.

### **Worcester State Foundation - Club E**

Club Education (Club E) increases family stability and mobility by providing Worcester’s newcomer communities with job-related skills and English proficiency required for a living- wage career and socioeconomic integration. The program combines ESL with skills development to help individuals acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding, and navigating systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, training, or employment.

### **Worcester State Foundation – Latina Achievers in Search of Success (LASOS) (Women’s Initiative)**

Latina Achievers in Search of Success (LASOS)—which means ties or connections, as in “family ties”—engages sixth-grade Latina girls and their mothers or a significant adult in their lives in an enrichment program focusing on self-discovery, personal development, cultural enrichment, and early college awareness and career exploration. The goal is to promote resiliency and thereby arm girls and families with the skills needed to reduce violence in their lives and achieve aspirations.

### **Youth Opportunities Upheld, Inc. - Dynamy Youth Academy**

The Dynamy Youth Academy is a leadership and college success program for low-income Worcester high school students. Students have advisors to monitor progress and performance; adventure trips to develop self-confidence, leadership, and community; and they develop portfolios showing formal planning, goal setting, and self-reflection. Students have internships to explore interests and aptitudes, become knowledgeable about colleges and application process, and participate in community service projects.

### **YWCA Central Massachusetts - Girls Choice**

Girls CHOICE (Choosing Hope, Opportunity, and Independence through Career and Education) is a multiyear, coordinated system of support services and community connections for low-to-middle income, middle and high school girls in Worcester, Massachusetts. The program aims to empower girls to become self-sufficient through educational pursuits, gender-specific mentoring, and healthy youth development activities so that they can reach their full potential.

### **YWCA Central Massachusetts – Girls Promoting Safety (Women’s Initiative)**

Girls Promoting Safety (GPS) is a strength-based violence prevention education program that uses evidence-based curricula to teach middle school girls the resiliency skills and traits needed to avoid being victims of violence and engaging in risky behaviors. It is conducted during the school day in partnership with area middle schools. Both YWCA and Girls Inc staff facilitate this program.

### **YWCA Central Massachusetts - Greater Worcester Shelter (Daybreak)**

The YWCA's emergency shelter provides safe, confidential, emergency housing for single adults and adults with dependent children who are survivors of domestic violence. The program provides advocacy, support, and individual case management. Emergency shelter provides survivors with respite and the time, opportunity, and support needed to address the trauma they have experienced and begin the process of recovery. Using a well-being approach, advocates help survivors identify and build upon their strengths, enabling survivors to regain a sense of self-worth and preparing them to move toward self-sufficiency. While in shelter, survivors develop additional skills and a network of community resources that can support them as they move from crisis to stability.

### **YWCA Central Massachusetts – Racial Equity Program**

The YWCA Central Massachusetts will conduct race equity workshops for area non-profit leaders and members of the community. The YWCA has a proven track record of conducting effective anti-racism programs within our own organization and for organizations and individuals throughout the Greater Worcester community.

### **YWCA Central Massachusetts - Transitional Housing Program**

The YWCA's Transitional Housing Program (THP) in downtown Worcester provides affordable single occupancy units, and supportive services to a diverse population of women 18 years and older. Through comprehensive individual case management and wrap-around support services, low-income women can overcome the conditions that led to homelessness and housing instability and break the cycle of poverty.

### **YWCA Central Massachusetts - Worcester Early Education and Care**

The YWCA's Early Education and Care program in downtown Worcester is a licensed, QRIS Validated Level 3, and nationally accredited full day, full year, infant, toddler, and preschool early education and care program. The program ensures school-readiness with an evidence based, developmentally appropriate curriculum (Creative Curriculum) to nurture a child's development in six key domains: social/emotional, physical, cognitive, literacy, language, and math/numeracy.