Our Region

Commonly known as the Southlands, the South-Southwest Suburban Region (SSW) is comprised of nearly one million residents living in 62 communities throughout Cook and Will Counties. The Southland is home to more than 20% of suburban Cook County’s population and nearly 15% of its businesses.

CHALLENGES FACING THE REGION:
- According to our 2020 ALICE report*, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic 30% of households in Cook County struggled to make ends meet.
- High property taxes and a shrinking tax base are driving businesses, households, and jobs from the south suburbs.
- Significant food insecurity as 52% of residents in Ford Heights, 42% in Riverdale and 40% in Robbins are at risk of food insecurity with many other communities facing at-risk levels greater than 30%.

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES:
A DUAL APPROACH IN THE SOUTH-SOUTHWEST SUBURBS

- Food
- Mortgage and Rental Support
- Safety from Abuse
- Access to Healthcare
- Affordable housing
- Job training and employment support

*United Way ALICE – Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed – research provides statewide insight into the financial struggles facing many households.
JOIN US! Together, we can build the South-Southwest Suburbs stronger and more equitably.

Learn more at LIVEUNITEDchicago.org

UNITED WAY OF METRO CHICAGO

Investment Strategy in the South-Southwest Suburbs

United Way of Metro Chicago is committed to helping our neighbors meet their basic needs and working alongside community leaders to rebuild stronger, more equitable neighborhoods through our Neighborhood Network place-based approach.

IMPACT GRANT FUNDING (March–December 2021)

Total Investment………………………………………………$1,015,000
Total Number of Funded Agencies ........................................22
■ Basic Needs Agencies………………………………………………9
■ Systems Improvement & Innovation Agencies …………………3
■ Coordinated Services Agencies …………………………………10

UNITED WAY INVESTMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CY21</td>
<td>$240,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CY20</td>
<td>$240,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CY19</td>
<td>$220,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY18</td>
<td>$381,245*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*FY18 investment includes a 6-month extension from July 1–December 31, 2018

LEAD AGENCY
Metropolitan Family Services

COMMUNITY VISION
Improving outcomes for families by addressing food insecurity and other basic needs.

Connecting South-Southwest Suburban Families to Direct Support

UNUNITING FOR THE HOLIDAYS

In partnership with local community partners, United Way hosts Uniting for the Holidays, a festive drive-through food and basic needs donation event that takes place in November and December. Uniting for the Holidays addresses food insecurity facing our neighbors in Blue Island, Chicago Heights, Ford Heights, Harvey, and Robbins by providing thousands of families with a holiday meal, toys, PPE, and other essential items.

CARE PROJECTS

United Way partners with volunteer groups to create essential item care package kits that are distributed to United Way nonprofit community partners across the region. Kits include Hygiene Kits, Baby Kits, Snack Packs, Literacy Kits, New Home Kits, School Supply Kits and Senior Kits.

APRIL FOOD DAY

April Food Day is United Way of Metro Chicago’s annual food collection event and awards luncheon that addresses food insecurity in the SSW suburbs, a region facing high levels of poverty and systemic education, health, and wealth inequities that were amplified by COVID-19. The event distributes approximately 100,000 pounds of non-perishable food items and household goods to pantries across the Southland.