Our Region

Commonly known as the Southlands, the South-Southwest Suburban Region (SSW) is comprised of nearly 1 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 2023 ALICE report*, 36% of households in Cook County are struggling to make ends meet.
- High property taxes and a shrinking tax base are driving businesses, households, and jobs from the south suburbs.
- 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

Responding to Immediate Basic Needs of South-Southwest Suburban Residents

Building Neighborhood Systems Stronger and More Equitably in the South-Southwest Suburbs

- 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.
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 build stronger, more equitable neighborhoods through our Neighborhood Network place-based approach.

IMPACT GRANT FUNDING*

- **Total Investment**: $979,718
- **Total Number of Funded Agencies**: 24
  - Food Access: 4
  - Housing: 4
  - Access to Healthcare: 9
  - Safety from Abuse: 3
  - Workforce Development: 4

*January–December 2023

Join Us! Together, we can build the South-Southwest Suburbs stronger and more equitably. Learn more at [LIVEUNITEDchicago.org](http://LIVEUNITEDchicago.org)

Connecting South-Southwest Suburban Families to Direct Support

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. The event distributes up to 100,000 pounds of non-perishable food items and household goods to pantries across the Southland.

UNITING FOR THE HOLIDAYS

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, and Robbins by providing thousands of families with a holiday meal and gifts.

Community Visions

As new Neighborhood Networks in 2023, Ford Heights/Chicago Heights, Harvey, Park Forest/Richton Park are developing and refining their community visions over the next three years.