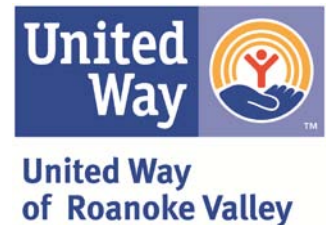


United Way of Roanoke Valley GENERAL FUNDING PRIORITIES



EDUCATION¹

I. Early Childhood Education

Vision Statement:

Young children in the Roanoke Valley will achieve the cognitive, physical, social and emotional development necessary to enter kindergarten ready to learn and succeed in school.

Goal:

Increase the number of children aged 0-5 in the Roanoke Valley that arrive prepared for the first day of kindergarten as determined by tangible measurement tools.²

Long-term outcome 1: Parents of children 0-5 are able to access affordable quality out-of-home care and education for their children.

Community Change: Increase the quality of childcare utilized by families with young children.

Proposed United Way strategies:

- Support programs that provide ongoing early childhood education training for pre-school teachers and childcare providers in key areas needed to stimulate age-appropriate growth and development of young children.
- Support programs that provide quality improvement support services crucial to raising and sustaining the quality of child care being provided at various settings.
- Support efforts that equip early childhood professionals and parents to help children transition from preschool to kindergarten.

Community Change: Expand affordable opportunities for parents to obtain quality childcare.

Proposed United Way strategies:

- Support programs that provide affordable access to quality early care and education for families and allow parents to gain or retain employment through a combination of financial support and/or knowledge of various resources in the community.

¹ General Education funding priorities have been edited to reflect input from the Education team meetings and ensure consistency with the outcomes with the more targeted initiatives.

² Note: Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) and Brigance Developmental Screening will be used as the primary measurement tools, with others possibly used as well.

Long-term outcome 2: Parents of children 0-5 become more committed, confident and skilled in helping their children be prepared for school.

Community Change: Develop and implement a public awareness and engagement plan that will help parents become more committed, confident and skilled in helping their children be prepared for school.

Proposed United Way strategies:

- Support programs that enhance parents' ability and engage them in supporting the age-appropriate cognitive, physical, social and emotional development of young children.
- Utilize parent education programs and other points of contact with the family as a means to increase parental knowledge on how to prepare children for school starting at an early age.
- Support early intervention services that create a healthy beginning for young children.

Long-term outcome 3: Community leaders and the public understand the cost and benefits of, and actively support, early childhood care and education both from the social service and economic development standpoints.

Community change: Public and private partners collaborate to adopt and implement a comprehensive, high quality approach to school readiness for children 0-5 in the Roanoke Valley.

Proposed United Way strategies:

- Engage in a sustained public awareness and education campaign on the importance of investing early that will mobilize parents, caregivers, community, and business leaders to support early childhood education efforts in the area.
- Support efforts to achieve agreement in the community regarding common outcomes for school readiness that are broader than and/or cut across goals of specific providers.
- Create financial and other incentives for collaboration in adopting and implementing a comprehensive high quality approach to school readiness.
- Encourage businesses to develop family-friendly policies and practices related to school readiness.

II. High School Graduation

Vision Statement:

Children in the Roanoke Valley will have the tools, resources and support they need to be successful in school and be college and/or workforce-ready.

Goal:

Contribute to the statistically significant improvement of the graduation rates within Roanoke Valley by enabling students and their families to be better prepared to take advantage of the opportunities provided by public education.

Long –term outcome 1: Students are able to read and comprehend by the end of third grade.

Community change: Parents and families of children provide greater support for their children to learn to read.

Proposed United Way strategies:

- Engage in a public awareness and education campaign to improve parent understanding of the importance of their children having good reading skills and how they can assist their children in obtaining those skills.
- Encourage and support collaborations among existing programs that help parents develop better skills to assist their children to read.

Community change: Greater coordination among community resources engaged in helping children to read and comprehend by 3rd grade.

Proposed United Way strategies:

- Encourage and support collaborations among schools, community institutions, parents and volunteers that help children in to read.

Long –term outcome 2: Students are connected with help that they need to stay in school beginning at an early age.

Community change: Support research and/or evidence-based programs working with school-age children and their families that help youth succeed in school.

Proposed United Way strategies:

- Ensure the availability of quality before- and after-school care for school-aged children and youth that emphasizes character development and academic performance.
- Support early drop-out prevention efforts targeting elementary school-aged children and continue pursuing drop-out prevention efforts among middle and high school-aged children.
- Support collaborative approaches that build external and internal assets in youth and prevent risky behavior.

Community change: Roanoke Valley youth are matched with caring volunteers who establish ongoing, supportive relationships as mentors, tutors, or in other roles.

Proposed United Way strategies:

- Support efforts to develop an integrated system to find, recruit, match, train and manage volunteers to serve as tutors and mentors to children in the Roanoke Valley, and provide early and ongoing support to students who need relationships and support.
- Support programs that help establish long-term relationships between youth and caring adults who can offer direction and guidance.

Community change: Parents and family members of students in the Roanoke valley actively support children's education and help connect their children with appropriate support services.

Proposed United Way strategies:

- Encourage collaboration among existing programs that help equip parents with information and tools with which to support their children's education.
- Develop and implement a public awareness campaign that emphasizes the value of graduating from high school to success in life and the benefits of connecting children to appropriate support services, including adult mentors.
- Encourage employers to adopt family-friendly policies and practices that enable parents to participate in teacher conferences and other school functions and are supportive of student success.