

ESSENTIAL SUPPORT FUND

GENERAL FUND OVERVIEW

United Way of Racine County's Essential Support Fund supports individuals and families in Racine County by addressing their most urgent and immediate needs.

This report reflects outcomes from the second round of funding, during which 14,884 Racine County residents were served. Across the first two rounds, the Essential Support Fund served a cumulative total of 22,384 residents.

Projects supported by the fund focused on ensuring equitable access to essential resources and services critical to individual and family well-being, including food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, utilities and personal safety.

Funds primarily supported individuals and households experiencing significant economic hardship, including those with incomes below the federal poverty level, households classified as ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed), individuals qualifying for emergency food assistance and populations facing barriers to accessing essential services.

United Way of Racine County is grateful for Microsoft Corporation's continued support of the Essential Support Fund. This partnership allowed community organizations to respond to urgent needs and connect Racine County residents with critical resources and services.



PROJECT RECAPS

Burlington Transitional Living Center, Inc. Hotel Stay/Rental Assistance

TLC used grant funding to provide hotel stays and rental assistance to individuals and families who could not be accommodated in its 12-bed shelter because of limited capacity, family size or medical needs. Hotel stays provide immediate safety, including during a storm-related power outage, while giving participants additional time to work with TLC on plans for permanent housing. Funding also helped prevent evictions and supported residents in securing permanent housing by covering security deposits or first month's rent. These services reduced the stress and uncertainty of homelessness and provided participants with greater safety and stability as they worked to rebuild their lives.



Focus on Community

Family Advocacy Program (FAP)

Focus on Community's Family Advocacy Program (FAP) provides wraparound support and case management to students and families in the Racine Unified School District who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability. A FAP Coach contacts families within 24-48 hours of referral, completes intake and needs assessments, and helps each family develop individualized SMART goals, with securing stable housing as the primary focus. The coach also coordinates housing, healthcare, education, and other essential services; conducts weekly check-ins and provides ongoing case management until the family achieves stability.

HALO, Inc.

HALO Shelter Stability

HALO's shelter serves approximately 600 men, women and children annually in Racine County by providing basic needs, case management and access to housing. Everyone who enters the shelter has experienced some degree of trauma so staff members work to address each guest's immediate needs and help them feel safe and comfortable upon arrival. Grant funding supported essential items such as fresh clothing, towels, bedding and shower supplies. It also allowed HALO to upgrade and replace heavily used kitchen supplies subject to regular wear and breakage. Amid rising costs, this funding helped HALO maintain essential shelter services while supporting guests on their path toward self-sufficiency and housing stability.

Racine County Food Bank

Food Purchases

The Racine County Food Bank purchased shelf-stable canned meats and proteins, including tuna, chicken and ham, for distribution through affiliate food pantries, addressing an ongoing need for proteins. The canned meats and proteins are easy to store, handle and distribute. The project helped Racine County residents seeking emergency food assistance access reliable sources of protein to prepare hearty, nutritious and balanced meals.

Coordinated Support

One family had experienced homelessness for nearly three years and had stayed in motels and campers. After learning that the participant's husband was a veteran, the Focus on Community Family Advocacy Program coach connected the family with the Center for Veterans Issues and a veterans housing program. The family secured an affordable duplex, received assistance with the security deposit and rent, and moved into stable housing. The program also connected the family with Feather-a-Nest to furnish the apartment. Support from Family Advocacy Program improved the family's stability and helped meet their immediate needs while they continued working toward permanent housing.



SAFE Haven of Racine

Feather-a-Nest Mattress and Bedframe Project

Through its Feather-a-Nest Mattress and Bedframe Project, SAFE Haven furnished homes for individuals and families transitioning from homelessness or crisis situations into permanent housing. Funding provided participants with new mattresses and bed frames. Access to a safe, clean and stable sleeping environment improves participants' comfort and quality of sleep while fostering dignity, stability and a sense of normalcy during a critical transition. The project promotes long-term housing stability, reducing the likelihood of a client returning to homelessness and easing demand on local shelter systems.

Southern Lakes Area Love, Inc. Community Relief Program

The program used a three-pronged approach to address unmet community needs by providing healthy food options for individuals with dietary restrictions, offering weeklong hotel stays for people experiencing homelessness and assisting households at risk of eviction or utility disconnection. The funding provided shelter during the most severe winter weather, prevented evictions and helped individuals with diabetes, heart or digestive conditions access food that supports their health needs. As a result, participants did not have to choose between eating and protecting their health and families received immediate relief and increased housing stability.

“Through the United Way of Racine County Essential Support Fund, Feather-a-Nest is able to meet critical community needs, ensuring individuals and families have the basic furnishings necessary to truly stabilize in their housing. By providing beds and mattresses, we are restoring dignity, improving health and setting the foundation for long term success.”

– Jeanette Brown, SAFE Haven of Racine

“Our service to our community has long prioritized the worth and dignity of the person in need. These funds allowed us to keep families in shelter, to keep families together and to improve health outcomes by catering to specific dietary needs. I cannot overstate the joy I felt being able to solve problems in real time and watching people with health challenges light up when they realized their new choices. This grant was completely transformative for the way that we help people.”

– Christian Wilson, Love, Inc.



OUTCOMES



436 individuals transitioning out of homelessness received a mattress and bed frame, helping them establish safe and comfortable homes.



25 families experiencing homelessness received case management and essential items to support their transition into stable housing, with seven families successfully securing housing.



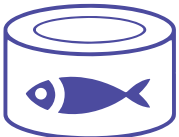
510 individuals staying at HALO received essential shelter services and supplies to meet their immediate needs.



Emergency housing and homelessness-prevention assistance included 39 hotel stays and rental assistance for 14 households. This support helped eight families remain in their homes and six households secure permanent housing.



More than 700 individuals accessed food options that accommodated dietary restrictions and supported their specific health needs.



Approximately 6,800 individuals experiencing food insecurity gained access to nutritious protein through the purchase and distribution of 13,328 shelf-stable protein products.

