UNITED WAY OF THE FRANKLIN & HAMPSHIRE REGION
Media Release

Contacts:
Geoff Naunheim, President & CEO
(413) 584-3962 x104
geoff@uw-fh.org

Jenny Coeur, Program Director
(413) 584-3962 x102
jenny@uw-fh.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / June 29, 2026

United Way of the Franklin & Hampshire Region Celebrates Its Five-Year Anniversary in July

NORTHAMPTON, MA, June 29, 2026 – This July, United Way of the Franklin & Hampshire Region is celebrating its fifth anniversary.

Prior to July of 2021, two separate United Ways served Franklin and Hampshire counties: United Way of Hampshire County and United Way of Franklin County. On July 1, 2021, the two officially merged and became United Way of the Franklin & Hampshire Region (UWFH). As stated in the original 2021 press release:

"Following 12+ months of thorough vetting and exploration, United Way of Hampshire County and United Way of Franklin County have come together to form a new organization, *effective July 1, 2021.*

"United Way of the Franklin and Hampshire Region will continue to provide the support and services our communities have come to rely on from United Way. As a single entity, the unified United Way will be better positioned to meet the changing needs of our communities, having greater resources to utilize in our ongoing work to create a strong, equitable and inclusive community, especially for our neediest.

"As evidenced by our experiences through the COVID pandemic, we need to be more responsive to evolving regional needs, we need to be more agile when faced with unexpected challenges, and we need to adapt to changes in donor interests and habits. A larger, more consistently staffed organization will allow for greater flexibility and resources in the areas of programming and fundraising. As a merged organization, we can build our capacity to have a larger collective impact on our greater community, and provide the stability needed to best support service agencies and remain relevant."

Over the past five years, UWFH has continued to grow. This past year has been UWFH's most successful yet in terms of overall revenue and diaper donations for the UWFH Diaper Bank. They currently also support a Digital

Navigation program (https://uw-fh.org/digital-navigators), which provides free technical support and digital education to Franklin County residents. At least some of UWFH's success can be attributed to emergency campaigns like the United Response Fund (created to counteract cuts to the SNAP food program last fall) and "The Diaper Deficit" campaign back in April and May (to fill the gap created by a loss of funding and diapers for the federal pilot program operated by the UWFH Diaper Bank).

The positive response to these efforts has been really encouraging. However, the fact that such campaigns were deemed necessary at all just goes to show that the region's needs are growing at a fast pace.

"In the five years since our merger, United Way of the Franklin & Hampshire Region has grown stronger, more resourceful, and more connected to the communities we serve. We've worked hard to show up as a real convener and collaborative partner," says Geoff Naunheim, UWFH President and CEO. "But the needs around us are growing faster than we can keep up. Reduced government support, rising costs, and real economic uncertainty mean more families are leaning on a safety net that's been systematically eroded. Front-line nonprofits are being asked to do more with much less. That's not a sustainable trajectory for the community."

Every year, UWFH secures multi-year partnerships with other local agencies to address the region's most pressing issues. Last year, $800,000 in grants were awarded to partners with programming focused on priority areas like youth wellbeing and mental health, food security, economic security, and more. This July, UWFH is awarding grants to partner agencies as part of its Healthy Communities priority area, which will run from 2026-2029. Each year during that three-year period, $45,000 will go to general partnerships and $85,000 will go to Health & Social Connectedness Aligned Impact partnerships.

$800,000 is a large sum, but it only covers a fraction of the requests for funding support. In fact, only about one-sixth of requesting agencies will be awarded funds this year. This is yet another example of how our area's needs are dramatically outpacing even the best efforts to meet them.

General partnership recipients this year include Amherst Mobile Market, The Heartwing Center in Turner's Falls, Artspace in Greenfield, Hilltown Community Health Center in Worthington, and North Quabbin Citizen Advocacy in Orange. Aligned Impact partnerships will be with Craig's Doors in Amherst, It Takes a Village in Huntington, and LaunchSpace in Orange. (Learn more about these and UWFH's other agency partnerships at https://uw-fh.org/our-partner-agencies.)

UWFH thanks local community members and businesses for their support, and for making it possible for the organization to have a positive impact on the health and sense of social connectedness for people in the Franklin and Hampshire region. And a very big thanks for all the support that the community has shown over the past five years. Because of that, UWFH plans on being here for many more years to come.

About United Way of the Franklin & Hampshire Region

UWFH's mission is to work in partnership with the local community to identify and address the region's most pressing issues. They inspire and engage individuals and organizations to invest together in overcoming those challenges. Their vision is that all individuals and families should have equitable access to the tools and resources designed to support their basic needs and ensure future successes. In doing so, UWFH helps build a strong, vibrant, and inclusive community.

To donate, volunteer, or learn more about the organization, you can contact United Way of the Franklin & Hampshire Region at (413) 584-3962 or visit www.uw-fh.org.