



Great Rivers
UNITED WAY

FAST FACTS

- 1** A gift to Great Rivers United Way is the single most impactful way to invest in your community. The problems people face are interrelated, and the diverse programs that Great Rivers United Way offers and supports work together to address complex challenges, like mental wellbeing, while meeting basic needs, such as food, shelter, and safety. No other agency, donor, volunteer, or sector of the community can do this work alone. Together, we can make a big difference.
- 2** The Compass Now community needs assessment is a joint effort between Great Rivers United Way, area healthcare organizations, and county health departments to improve quality of life for everyone in the communities we serve. The Compass Now Report serves as a reference tool and foundation for action plans that solve problems long term. Great Rivers United Way used the 2024 Compass Now Report to determine that funds currently being raised should support mental wellbeing, in addition to basic needs. In Spring 2025, Community Mental Wellbeing grants were awarded for the first time to 20 local nonprofits and impacted 52,000 people.
- 3** Great Rivers United Way doesn't just fund – we also create, lead, and operate programs that address local needs. In addition to investing in nonprofit partners, Great Rivers United Way programs Born Learning, Community Care, Compass Now, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Great Rivers 211, Learn To Lead, Nourishing Futures, Providers And Teens Communicating for Health, Techquity, and Ugetconnected turn local needs into community solutions.
- 4** Great Rivers United Way helps local nonprofits build capacity through training, collaboration, volunteer recruitment, community insights, and strategic support. By strengthening the nonprofit landscape, we're helping create a stronger community for everyone. Thanks to this leadership, Great Rivers United Way and its partners achieve more together than they could alone.
- 5** ALICE stands for Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed. ALICE works hard – oftentimes holding two or three jobs – but struggles to make ends meet. In the most recent ALICE Report, 24% of Wisconsin Households were identified as ALICE, with an additional 11% of households falling below the federal poverty level. That means a combined 35% of Wisconsin households are facing financial hardship. That breakdown is 25%-10%-35% in Minnesota.
- 6** According to Great Rivers United Way's 2024 Compass Now survey, 83% of respondents reported being very or moderately concerned about mental health in our region, while 71% reported being very or moderately concerned about mental health stigma.
- 7** In response to the 2024 Compass Now survey, local people reported an average of 4.2 to 4.6 poor mental health days per month. Poor mental health can affect productivity, absenteeism, turnover, safety, and more. Great Rivers United Way mobilizes communities to action so all can thrive by investing in local resources that foster mental wellbeing, helping people succeed at work, at home, and in the community.
- 8** Of respondents to the 2024 Compass Now survey, 39% rated fair or poor their community as a place that meets the overall needs of children, and 51% rated fair or poor efforts to meet the overall needs of persons with disabilities. By ensuring access to basics like food, shelter, and safety, and helping people feel cared for throughout their lives, Great Rivers United Way is listening and responding to our region's top needs.
- 9** The most recent La Crosse County Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) reported that almost half of high school students have had at least one mental health challenge. Forty-two percent of students reported experiencing anxiety, while one fourth reported being depressed almost every day for two weeks in a row. These numbers have been steadily decreasing since 2021, thanks, in part, to community programs that connect young people with trusted adults and safe spaces.

