There is a gap between the worlds of learning and work in Southwest Virginia. What’s needed is a true “cradle-to-career” continuum: a talent pipeline that prepares the next generation for the jobs of tomorrow, supplies businesses with skilled workers, and builds a robust, competitive economy.

Through an initiative-based, cradle-to-career approach using sustainable solutions, United Way of Southwest Virginia brings partners together to fight for a healthy, educated, and financially stable workforce of tomorrow.

**FIGHTING FOR TOMORROW’S WORKFORCE**

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**HOW WE DO IT: OUR CRADLE-TO-CAREER APPROACH**

**EARLY CHILDHOOD**

- Children are cared for in quality environments, ready for kindergarten, and equipped with the skills and support necessary for learning and success

  - Smart Beginnings
  - Virginia Quality
  - Infant & Toddler Specialist Network
  - Al’s Pals
  - Childcare Start-up Assistance
  - Preschool Development

**ELEMENTARY**

- Children are fed, engaged in healthy lifestyles, and reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade

  - Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
  - Backpaacks Unite
  - Trauma-Informed Community Network

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

- Youth have goals, support, and a plan for the future, basic financial literacy, and knowledge about their health and well-being

  - Major Clarity
  - Reality Check Financial Simulations
  - Careers Expo for Youth
  - Educators in Industry tours of employers
  - Soft skills curriculum

**HIGH SCHOOL**

- Youth gain hands-on career experience and complete high school with a plan to enter the workforce or pursue opportunities in post-secondary education or training

  - Project-Based Learning
  - Credential alignment
  - Internships

**BEYOND**

- Families are healthy, educated and financially stable, and are contributing members of a workforce that invest in the community by giving, advocating, and volunteering

  - FamilyWize
  - My Free Taxes
  - VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)
**WHY WE DO IT**

*Southwest Virginia is at a critical crossroads.* Population decline over the past two decades has depleted our workforce. Losing workers has stressed our local economy, constantly reducing the resources we have to build our children's skills. Because of this, United Way of Southwest Virginia is investing in the emerging workforce. We invite community members to unite in partnership to plan and work together, giving power to our entire region to build our ideal workforce of tomorrow.

Together, we can break the cycle of unemployment, poverty, and population decline. United Way of Southwest Virginia is creating a healthy, well-educated, economically mobile workforce by making focused investments in children and youth to retain their talent, energy, and love for this region by *preparing them for jobs here at home.*

**WHAT WE DO**

*United we fight. United we win.* United Way of Southwest Virginia fights for the health, education and financial stability of every person in our region because they are the building blocks for a good quality of life. We win by living United. By forging unlikely partnerships. By finding new solutions to old problems. By mobilizing the best resources. And by inspiring individuals to join the fight against our community’s most daunting social crises. We are more than fundraisers. We are hand-raisers. Game-changers.

**WHERE WE DO IT**

With a footprint that covers nearly 20% of the state of Virginia, United Way of Southwest Virginia programs and initiatives serve the counties of Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Lee, Montgomery, Pulaski, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe, and the cities of Bristol, Galax, Norton, and Radford. Through collaboration with government, businesses, educational institutions, nonprofits, and individuals, United Way innovates for positive, lasting social change.

#LIVEUNITED