



UNITED WAY OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY UNITED RESPONSE FUND

Investment Update – September 2025

Catalyzing Action: A United Response

United Way of Massachusetts Bay is investing \$130,000 in first-round grants from its United Response Fund, launched earlier this summer to help stabilize community-based organizations, strengthen the safety net and sustain the progress and impact of the nonprofit sector in the region amid sweeping federal policy changes.

The initial round of funding underscores United Way's commitment to address emerging needs by catalyzing collective action and partnerships. The grants will also provide emergency financial assistance to individuals and families facing urgent challenges meeting essential needs like food, housing and utilities.

“Through these investments, we’re responding to emerging needs now and investing in coordinated strategies to ensure timely, targeted support for affected communities. These grants represent more than funding – they’re an investment in resilience and innovation.”

–Marty Martinez,

Ansín President and
CEO at United Way
of Massachusetts Bay



Emerging Need »

Immigrant workers are leaving the workforce as protections are revoked, risking up to 148,000 jobs. Funding reductions to adult education may limit access to ESOL and job training for 250,000 state residents.

United Response Fund Investment »

United Way is investing \$30,000 to expand access to vocational English classes and connect immigrant workers to jobs that meet the needs of local employers. JVS Boston is leading a coalition of partners to reimagine the ESOL delivery system, expand job training and meet labor market demand.

“I want to say a heartfelt thank you to United Way, our long-time partner and supporter, for the investment through the United Response Fund. It will lead to transformational impact not just in the lives of individuals, but for families, companies, and the entire Massachusetts workforce.”

–Kira Khazatsky,

President and CEO at JVS Boston

Emerging Need »

Rising immigration enforcement is creating fear among families. Clear guidance on rights helps them feel safe at school, childcare and work.

United Response Fund Investment »

United Way is awarding \$40,000 to the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition to expand Know Your Rights programming to early education center-based partners and family childcare providers, equipping families, children, and educators with critical tools to prepare for shifting immigration enforcement.

“We are incredibly grateful for this funding from United Way. Educational partners must understand the steps they need to take to protect students and keep parents informed. This will allow everyone in school and childcare to focus on what matters most: Learning.”

—Liz Sweet, Executive Director at MIRA

“Immigrants are the lifeblood of our hard-working community, and we are so grateful to the United Way and its partners for helping our collaborative to support and stabilize the families that make our community great.”

—Jess Andor, Executive Director of Lawrence CommunityWorks

Emerging Need »

Federal changes are threatening access to benefits for essential needs, putting Lawrence families at risk. Over 30% of residents in Lawrence rely on SNAP benefits and some neighborhoods face food insecurity rates over 60%.

United Response Fund Investment »

United Way is awarding \$30,000 to We Are Lawrence, a coalition of over 70 partners led by Lawrence Community Works, to mitigate harmful effects of federal policy changes by strengthening community-wide support systems through advocacy, training and resources. This partnership model could serve as an example that can be replicated in other communities.

Emerging Need »

Widespread changes to safety net programs and work authorizations are creating urgent needs for vulnerable families, especially immigrant families facing increased enforcement activity.

United Response Fund Investment »

United Way will deploy \$30,000 to Brazilian Workers Center, Immigrant Family Services Institute and Lawrence CommunityWorks to meet needs arising from federal policy actions and increased enforcement activity. This emergency financial assistance will ensure individuals and families can access essential needs like food, housing and utilities.

» More information on the United Response Fund can be found [here](#).

