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## **For immediate release**

### **For more information, contact:**

James Ayres, Executive Director  
United Way of Hampshire County  
413-584-3962 (office)  
413-348-6622 (cell)  
jim@uwhamshire.org

## **United Way Invests in Local Initiatives to Improve Financial Stability**

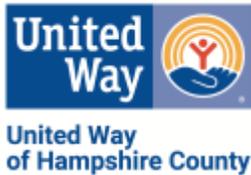
Northampton, MA - United Way of Hampshire County has announced three-year funding awards totaling \$810,000 to 14 area programs and organizations with demonstrated ability to improve financial stability of Hampshire County residents. Awards range from \$30,000 to \$105,000 over the grant period.

For many in our community, economic hardship can result in having to make difficult choices. Whether to pay the rent or buy food, staying on public assistance or trying to access resources to get a better job and earn more income, sleeping on the street or in a shelter that accepts you and offers help, gaining skills that will result in one's ability to sustain a solid economic footing.

“Whether addressing the needs of our neighbors in crisis or those working to stay on their feet, we believe that all Hampshire County residents should have resources to turn to when facing economic challenges,” explained Executive Director Jim Ayres. “These include supports related to food, shelter, job-skills, permanent housing, language education, legal assistance and financial literacy.

Awards were determined after a six-month process that involved: listening to feedback from experts in the field; gathering and reviewing regional trend and economic data; and working to ensure that funds would address not only immediate needs, but also invest in long-term, strategic change.

“In making these decisions, our process looked at many issues, including the strength of individual applications, the geographic balance of our investment as well as the balance of programs and types of interventions,” said Ayres. “We want to ensure balance and diversity on many fronts.”



## **2017 Economic Security Programs**

- Amherst Survival Center
- Casa Latina
- Center for New Americans
- CHD Supportive Housing Program
- Community Action
- Community Legal Aid
- Craig's Doors
- Easthampton Community Center
- Foodbank of Western MA
- Hilltown CDC
- International Language Institute
- Northampton Survival Center
- ServiceNet Interfaith Shelter
- Valley CDC

In addition to these fourteen awards, our United Way will make smaller grants to newer initiatives that are just getting started. "These promising new programs aren't yet at a level where we're able to offer full grants as they are still developing," Ayres said. "Yet, they represent great ideas and are engaging key populations. We want to support their growth and potential, and help build their capacity going forward."

Those receiving capacity-building support are the Quaboag Hills Community Coalition in Ware and It Takes a Village, based in the Hilltowns.

### About United Way of Hampshire County

United Way of Hampshire County engages and inspires the people, employers and organizations of Hampshire County to give, advocate, and volunteer on behalf of our community. Our vision is that all individuals and families have the tools and resources to reach their full potential through education, economic security and wellness.

Lifting together, we build strong, vibrant, and inclusive communities.

To learn more or to make a donation, please visit: [www.uwhampshire.org](http://www.uwhampshire.org).

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