



United Way of Greater Houston

# United Way **THRIVE**

**Do  
something  
about it.**

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# TOP THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT

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## United Way THRIVE

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Stronger, more financially stable families mean a better community for us all.

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Last year, United Way THRIVE helped more than 52,000 families create better financial futures.

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More than 10,000 families received financial education and coaching last year.

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The average THRIVE financial coaching client has savings of \$6,800.

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More than 6,900 United Way THRIVE clients received workforce development services to get a job or a better job.

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United Way THRIVE, launched and led by United Way of Greater Houston, is a collaborative of 21 nonprofit partners and partners across multiple sectors that work together to provide comprehensive services to support hardworking, low-income families in their efforts to achieve financial stability.

United Way THRIVE partners are strategically selected based on their ability to help families increase income, build savings and acquire assets, and to leverage resources and collaborate to best help families. The strength of United Way THRIVE is its network of partners and other organizations, like community colleges, financial institutions, employers and city and state agencies, which work together to connect and provide families with the right services to help them achieve financial stability.

United Way THRIVE gives families the tools, resources and support to attain what every family wants: good jobs with good wages, safe and affordable housing, financial security and success for their children.

## What does it mean to THRIVE?

United Way THRIVE helps families achieve financial stability: earning sufficient income, coupled with responsible financial habits, to meet regular expenses and set aside funds for emergencies and future goals.

## Who are United Way THRIVE clients?

United Way THRIVE clients are hardworking, low-income families with children. They are often living paycheck to paycheck – on the edge, with nothing left over at the end of the month or in case of an emergency. THRIVE clients have different backgrounds and dreams, but they are all committed to their goal of achieving financial stability.



### The need

1 in 3 families lives on an annual income of \$40,000 or less.

\$47,000 a year is the minimum needed in the Greater Houston Area to cover basic essentials for a family of four with employer-sponsored health insurance.

28% of Texans don't have enough savings to get by for three months in the event of sudden job loss or emergency.

1 in 4 families has trouble buying groceries each month.

51% of Harris County children live in low-income families.

## The pathway to financial success

United Way THRIVE moves families along a pathway to financial stability. No matter where on the pathway they start, families benefit from access to United Way THRIVE resources and partners across our community, as well as United Way of Greater Houston's entire social services network.

**The Loyds are a young family with two children. Mr. and Mrs. Loyd both work, but struggled to get by each month and couldn't see a pathway to financial stability—until they found United Way THRIVE.**

### Increase employment skills

With little education, Mr. Loyd was working in a warehouse, making \$10 an hour. His family was living paycheck-to-paycheck when United Way THRIVE helped Mr. Loyd enroll in a vocational training program at a community college.

### Reduce expenses

The Loyds worked with their United Way THRIVE financial coach to reduce their expenses by making sure they were able to pay bills on time and connecting them with mainstream banking to eliminate check-cashing fees and expensive payday or auto title loans.

### Secure consistent employment

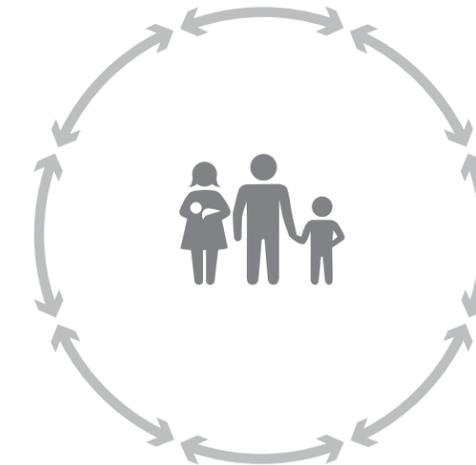
With his construction certification and the knowledge gained in United Way THRIVE job-readiness courses, Mr. Loyd landed a job making more than double what he made before.

### Stabilize living situation

Having a steady income for the first time, the Loyds no longer had to stay with family or run from eviction notices. Working with their United Way THRIVE financial coach, they developed a budget they could stick with and moved into an affordable apartment of their own.

### Increase income

Through United Way THRIVE, Mr. Loyd continued training and developing his skills, earning an advanced construction certificate, a promotion – and a significant raise. He and his wife took advantage of THRIVE's free tax preparation services, which helped them get their full refund and save the high fees they would have paid a preparer.



### Acquire assets

After the Loyds had saved enough for a down payment and taken THRIVE's homebuyer education courses, they worked with their financial coach to plan for and purchase a home that will be an asset for the family and a safe place for their kids to grow up.

### Reduce consumer debt

Their United Way THRIVE financial coach helped the Loyds talk with their creditors and create a realistic plan to pay off their debt.

### Build savings

Their financial coach also helped the Loyds make savings an important part of their budget. They started putting a little money aside for emergencies and putting some into an Individual Development Account to earn a match on the money they saved to buy a home.



United Way of Greater Houston

Helping families THRIVE

## How does United Way THRIVE help?

United Way THRIVE takes a holistic approach to financial stability, addressing the complex issues and overwhelming obstacles preventing families from achieving financial independence. United Way THRIVE's collaborative network means families don't just get help with one issue, but benefit from comprehensive and individualized plans that address the many challenges they face.

### Increasing income

United Way THRIVE clients increase their income through education, workforce development and vocational training, career counseling and other employment services, small business development assistance and free tax preparation.



**MARK'S STORY** Tired of living paycheck to paycheck, and with two young daughters, Mark knew something had to change.

"There's really no room out there for anybody who doesn't have an education," Mark says. "With no education, you're always stuck."

Unwilling to feel stuck any longer, Mark signed up for GED classes and a United Way THRIVE job-training program. He started with a concrete technician certification class and continued his education and training, taking job-readiness courses, then enrolling in a core construction program and eventually earning his welding certification—and his GED.

With Mark's training and certifications, he's been able to start a career as a welder. He earns more than double what he used to and feels more secure about supporting his family. "I was a man with a job," he says. "Now I'm a man with a career."

### Building savings

Through financial education and coaching, budgeting, credit/debt counseling, homeownership counseling, credit union membership and matched savings accounts, United Way THRIVE clients get the help they need to build savings for emergencies and future goals.



**DAISY'S STORY** In what seemed like an instant, Daisy lost her job and became a single parent. Without any savings to fall back on, she knew she had to do something to secure a better future for herself and her young daughter.

Through United Way THRIVE, Daisy got help with her resume, interview skills and professional clothing that helped her land a job making nearly 40 percent more than she was before. And, financial coaching, credit counseling and help building a budget gave Daisy the tools to gain control of her finances for the first time.

She opened an Individual Development Account to build savings and enrolled in financial education classes to improve her credit and learn to better manage her expenses. And, by taking advantage of United Way's free tax preparation, Daisy has started saving to buy a home.

United Way THRIVE gave Daisy the skills, confidence and financial independence she needs to manage her everyday expenses and save for the future.

## United Way THRIVE goal areas

United Way THRIVE helps families achieve financial stability by focusing on three key goals: increasing income, building savings and acquiring assets.

### Acquiring assets

United Way THRIVE helps clients acquire assets through credit-building loans, small business development, homeownership assistance, and low-interest loans.



**CHRISTIE'S STORY** After a divorce left her a single mother of three, Christie thought her dream of home ownership was just that—a dream. But, when she sat down with a United Way THRIVE counselor, that dream started to become real.

Through United Way THRIVE, Christie took budgeting, credit counseling and homeownership courses. She attended peer group meetings and learned about lenders, insurance, taxes and down payments. Christie also enrolled in a matched savings program that provided a 2:1 match on the money she saved to buy a home, and she began socking away every bit she could.

With a lot of hard work and help from United Way THRIVE, Christie was ready to buy a home for her family. "Walking through the doors and being able to tell my children that this is our house, this is where we're going to live, I can't even describe it," she says. "I just feel so happy."

### Hope starts here

With dedicated United Way THRIVE specialists on staff, 2-1-1 Texas/United Way HELPLINE is an entry point for families ready to take that first step toward a better financial future.

#### LUCY AND PEDRO'S STORY

When Lucy and Pedro told a 2-1-1 Texas/United Way HELPLINE specialist about wanting to repair their credit, save for a new home, and grow their small transportation company into a business that could support their family, the HELPLINE specialist referred them to United Way THRIVE.

Through THRIVE, the couple started working with a financial coach. They attended financial education workshops, took out a credit-builder loan to repair their credit, joined a small business support group, and were approved for a micro-enterprise loan to expand their small business.

Lucy and Pedro used that loan as working capital, and are currently expanding their business. They are in the process of building a home, and continue to work with their THRIVE financial coach to maintain their budget, pay back their loans, and plan their future goals.



United Way of Greater Houston

50 Waugh Drive  
Houston, TX 77007  
713-685-2300  
unitedwayhouston.org

## Year 5 results

Since its launch in 2008, United Way THRIVE has increased the reach, capacity and success of its network, and the number of families it serves, each year. In its fifth year, United Way THRIVE established a path to financial stability for more than 52,000 Houston-area families and achieved a 10:1 return on investment.



### Increasing income

More than 37,000 tax returns completed with more than \$48 million in refunds.

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More than 1,500 individuals secured better jobs.

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More than 6,900 individuals received workforce development services.

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\$20,628: Average income increase by United Way THRIVE workforce development clients.

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### Building savings

More than 10,600 families received financial education and coaching.

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More than \$1 million: Cumulative savings built by United Way THRIVE clients last year.

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More than 850 families opened matched savings accounts.

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5,100 families increased their savings.

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### Acquiring assets

74 families purchased a home.

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64 families started new businesses.

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212 individuals enrolled in higher education.

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549 families accessed low-cost loans to acquire an asset.

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