



UNITED WAY
Caldwell County

2026 Impact Report

3,488 bags of food delivered

(for the 2025-26 school year)



110+ kids

fed weekly in 7 Caldwell County Schools through our Backpack Program

With your support, we were able to add Valmead Elementary this year.



Cost of a bag went from \$5.51 last year to an average of \$5.89 this school year.



Our food bags are packed by volunteers of all ages including kids, retirees, and church groups.



13,756+ supplies donated

Over 269 teacher visits

This initiative provides free school supplies to all Caldwell County teachers, supporting their students and classrooms. Supplies and resources are available at no cost.



SAVE THE DATE!



STUFF THE BUS

AUGUST 3, 2026
1248 Hickory Blvd SW, Lenoir, NC
8:00 am-5:00 pm



In December, we hosted a Holiday Open House to further engage teachers and to recognize them for the work they do.



247,063 calls made to 211

1241 from Caldwell County, from May 2025-2026.

Get Connected. Get Help.™

TOP REQUEST CATEGORIES Display as: ● PERCENT ○ COUNT

Housing & Shelter	117,298
Food	16,350
Utilities	48,748
Healthcare & COVID-19	8,134
Mental Health & Addictions	2,816
Employment & Income	11,692
Clothing & Household	4,508
Child Care & Parenting	736
Government & Legal	4,935
Transportation Assistance	7,103

Caldwell's Top Needs

United Way of Caldwell County, along with over 40 other local United Ways, help to fund the operations of 211, an integral service, available to anyone in need.



In February, Kathy met a few members of the 211 call center staff. Yes, there are real people ready to help in your time of need.

TOP UTILITIES REQUESTS

Electric	70.1%
Gas	9.4%
Water	9.2%

TOP HOUSING & SHELTER REQUESTS

Shelters	37,577
Low-cost housing	26,183
Home repair/ maintenance	3,581
Rent assistance	46,713
Mortgage assistance	2,070
Landlord/ tenant issues	359
Contacts	474
Other housing & shelter	318



211 is a health and human services information and referral system.

It is FREE, confidential, available in 170+ languages, and available 24/7.

Caldwell County
North Carolina

Long Term Recovery Group



United Way of Caldwell County is a founding member of the Caldwell County Long Term Recovery Group and currently serves as its fiscal agent.

\$107,953.21

distributed to Caldwell citizens in need

If you still have damage from Hurricane Helene and need assistance, please apply online



<https://www.caldwellltrg.com>



Last March, we formally welcomed the Caldwell Women's Forum under our umbrella.

Caldwell Women's Forum exists to connect, empower, and support women in Caldwell County by building a strong network of encouragement, leadership, and collaboration.

Last year, we held 5 events. All women are welcome!



caldwellunitedway.org/caldwellwomensforum

How your dollars have helped our agencies



The Youth Leadership Council was newly formed and met from September-May. The Council consists of up to 15 youth, ages 14-19 that reflect our community. They promote leadership and service and organize programs and projects to enhance the well being of other youth in their communities. This Spring, they collected hygiene items to deliver to several middle schools.

United Way funds have helped impact our county's teen pregnancy rate and has helped teen families have healthier babies and better futures. Every year, nearly 4100 students are served. In addition, up to 20 pregnant or parenting females, their families, and sometimes, the baby's fathers.



United Way funds are used to purchase hands-on program materials, curriculum, and educational supplies that support school enrichment programs, as well as community based clubs and workshops.

Funds also support financial accessibility by allowing 4-H to waive or reduce participation fees for youth, volunteers, and educators demonstrating financial needs. Programs like chick embryology, soil babies, and the butterfly project were funded this year.



American Red Cross

Blue Ridge Chapter

United Way funds only help families in Caldwell County & help cover immediate needs to assist with recovery after a disaster. On average, the Red Cross provides \$680 in financial assistance which can be used for necessities like food, clothing, and shelter. They also help with access to health and mental health care, comfort and personal hygiene items.

DSS Emergency Assistance Program



United Way funds have helped 66 people in the first 4 months of 2026. Needs include: heating, cooling, medicine, utility bills, and even repairs in the home to keep a family from having to be separated.



Just People Now, Inc.

Just People Now primarily focuses on supporting at-risk children & their families. Every summer, they host a free Summer Youth Program that engages local youth in critical thinking, creativity, healthy eating, & positive behaviors activity. United Way funds support this. Just People Now also plans to launch a STEM program for middle and high school students.

These students were the winners of the 2025 Book Report Contest at the end of camp week!



How your dollars have helped our agencies



United Way funds play a vital role in helping keep the 56 bed emergency shelter safe, operational, stocked, and ready to respond the moment a crisis occurs. In 2026, 952 people were assisted, 4,287 meals were served, and 859 crisis calls were answered.

South Caldwell Christian Ministries



As of April 1, South Caldwell Christian Ministries has assisted 2,637 individuals this year. Without United Way funds, they would not be able to provide healthy foods for families, nor help keep families clothed, housed, cool in the summer, & warm in the winter.

This year, South Caldwell Christian Ministries purchased 192 school shirts for all 6th grade Hudson Middle School students for their Spirit Days. This project allowed every student the opportunity to be equal, as some families cannot afford to purchase optional school shirts for their children.

United Way funds ensure the continued delivery and quality of essential nutrition services for adults 60+ through their Home Delivered Meals and Congregate Nutrition programs. Currently, Blue Ridge Community Action operates six meal routes and three Congregate Nutrition sites across the county and maintain a wait list in both programs.



In 2026 so far, 14,561 Home Delivered Meals were served and 9,990 meals at the Congregate Nutrition sites.



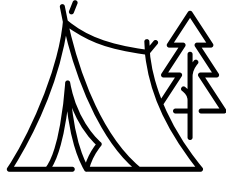
Caldwell People helps pay for anything a child needs beyond the basics of food, shelter, and clothing. They specifically support foster children. Funds are used to purchase needed items and/or services for which no other funds exist. This allows foster children with opportunities to fit in with other children and participate in school activities and be as normal as possible. Examples of funded activities include counseling, tutoring, camps, prom clothes, class rings, etc.

United Way funds allowed Smart Start to purchase a van, so that they can deliver food, diapers, wipes, and formulas to families with transportation, childcare, and workforce issues.

Funding also supports the Baby Essentials Program, which supported 4,200 people just from January-April 2026.



How your dollars have helped our agencies



United Way funds help support financial assistance requests from families. This includes helping to pay for summer camp, uniform needs, and camping supplies. During the Fall, the Scouts averages 30-40 families that request assistance with joining/registration costs. United Way funds provide scholarships to help any youth that would like to join Scouting. The funding also helps conduct the annual Scouting for Food Drive, which benefit Yokefellow, South Caldwell Christian Ministries, and the Lenoir Soup Kitchen.



So far, 24,921 meals have have been served in 2026. Anyone in need of food is served. Individuals do not have to meet any criteria to be served a hot meal.



485 students received direct services and 4,850 students received Tier 1 services (career fairs, community services projects, basic needs distribution)

Funds are used to sustain Communities In Schools' Basic Needs Bank which provides assistance for immediate food, utility bills, clothing, gas cards, and hygiene needs for students and families in need.



United Way funds help service students that come from households affected by poverty. Prime Time works with children with disciplinary problems that the school system is unable to support. They also serve children and youth beyond the age of 12 that cannot be left alone at home with younger siblings as they are developmentally and physically challenged. Prime Time served 57 families in 2026. They support children with physical, emotional, and learning disabilities in a safe and productive environment.



Dulatown Outreach- Prime Time Youth Focus