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STEPPING UP TO ENSURE VITAL SERVICES CONTINUE

United Way Muscatine County preserves Early Childhood and Family Support services

MUSCATINE, Iowa – When a reorganization of Early Childhood Iowa left Muscatine County without local leadership for coordinating key early childhood and family programs in fall 2024, United Way Muscatine County stepped in to ensure vital services for families remained intact.

As Muscatine County became part of a five-county Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) region, the absence of a local director jeopardized access to preschool tuition and transportation scholarships. United Way Muscatine County assumed responsibility for managing these funds and preserving equitable access to preschool for local families.

United Way also took on oversight of the Muscatine County Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC) funds, which provide funding to strengthen local child abuse prevention efforts. This role positioned the organization to apply for the newly restructured Iowa Child Abuse Prevention Program (ICAPP) grants on behalf of the region—a shift that now favors more collaborative, regionally organized applications.

“Our community has long-standing relationships and a shared vision for child and family success,” Kim Warren, Executive Director of AIM at United Way Muscatine County, said. “That

level of collaboration allowed us to move quickly and effectively when the structure changed. It's a testament to how united our local partners are around supporting children and families."

Thanks to strong community partnerships and an existing network of service providers, United Way Muscatine County successfully secured ICAPP and ECI funding for a range of programs including:

- **Family Program Services** delivered through the Muscatine Community YMCA, supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Teen Parents, and Mujeres Latinas—along with offering free childcare during program participation.
- **Sexual Abuse Prevention Training** provided to the community by Muscatine Community YMCA facilitators.
- **Coordinated Intake** through Public Health, which assesses newborn families for risk factors and connects them quickly to the services they need, including home visitation, parenting programs, and more.
- **Preschool Tuition and Transportation Scholarships** for families whose income falls below 200% of the federal poverty level, reducing barriers to early education.

"Receiving this funding is absolutely vital to the operation of our essential family support programming," Bret Olson, Executive Director of the YMCA, said. "Without these crucial funds, it simply wouldn't be possible to provide this invaluable support to our community. We're especially grateful for Kim Warren from AIM, whose leadership was instrumental in ensuring these funds remain right here in our community."

Muscatine County continues to outperform in key early childhood metrics, including home visitation participation, in part due to the strong integration of coordinated intake efforts. These services, combined with wraparound supports like the preschool scholarships, Imagination

Library, CPPC mini-grants, and Y Family Program Services, create a robust safety net for families with young children. Thanks to the work of Aligned Impact Muscatine County, an education initiative of United Way Muscatine County, \$192,759 will continue to fund services for children and families in Muscatine County through fiscal year 2026.

"While some regions in our state were unable to form the collaborations needed to mobilize applications, Muscatine County's existing collaboration, shared goals, and trust allowed us to respond immediately," Warren added. "We are proud to be a trusted leader in maintaining and expanding these essential programs."

United Way Muscatine County is committed to continuing its leadership in managing state-funded early childhood and family support services—ensuring every child and family in the county has the opportunity to thrive.

For more information, please contact Kim Warren at kim@unitedwaymuscatine.org or 563-594-6835.

About United Way Muscatine County: United Way Muscatine County is a nonprofit organization with a mission to mobilize resources to empower the greater Muscatine community to improve the lives of people in need. Through partnerships with local organizations, United Way Muscatine County focuses on increasing household independence through education and housing. The organization mobilizes volunteers, donors, and advocates to make a lasting difference across the whole county.

About Aligned Impact Muscatine County: [Aligned Impact Muscatine County \(AIM\)](#) is a cradle-to-career collective impact initiative of United Way Muscatine County that partners with over 35 organizations to align community resources and identify effective practices for implementation to reduce achievement gaps and improve outcomes for all students and families.