



United Way
of Greater Philadelphia
and Southern New Jersey

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey, Cooper University Health Care,
and Virtua Health Launch Transformative \$5M Initiative to Fight Poverty and Increase
Economic Mobility in Camden, NJ**

Four-Year Collaborative to Boost Income, Access, and Equity for Camden Residents

Philadelphia, PA (May 1, 2025) – United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey (UWGPSNJ), in partnership with Cooper University Health Care and Virtua Health, together with a host of other community leaders, today announced the launch of the Camden Community Uplift Initiative, a bold new effort to fight poverty and increase employment opportunities for Camden residents. This multi-sector initiative will be implemented over the next four years, backed by an initial \$5 million investment and a long-term goal of raising \$8 million to scale community-led solutions.

The Camden Community Uplift Initiative represents a data-driven, community-informed response to persistent challenges in Camden City, including a 34% poverty rate (vs. 12% nationally), limited broadband access, and low labor force participation. Driven by community input and partnerships with local organizations, the initiative focuses on two core strategies: expanding benefits access and connectivity and improving pathways to family-sustaining employment for Camden residents.

To support this initiative, UWGPSNJ convened four trusted Camden-based organizations to host focus groups with Camden residents and inform our research and approach. The participants noted that there are limited resources dedicated to supporting financial stability, relevant job training, and benefits access. In addition, many residents struggle to find well-paying jobs due to barriers such as a lack of affordable, reliable transit, opportunities for residents with a criminal record, and limited local opportunities.

“For the last five years, UWGPSNJ has been laser focused on listening to what the residents of Camden need and then bringing the right partners together to work collaboratively on community-led solutions,” said Bill Golderer, CEO and President of UWGPSNJ. “Through strategic investment, local leadership, and trusted local partnerships like those with Cooper and Virtua, we are committed to lifting up the entire community and ensuring change that lasts.”



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Initiative Pillars

1. **Benefits & Connectivity:**

Camden residents will gain access to “One Stop” community hubs offering healthcare enrollment, public benefits, free tax preparation, internet access, and digital skills training—supported by multilingual resources and digital navigators.

2. **Jobs Access:**

In partnership with the Federal Reserve’s Reinventing Our Communities (ROC) cohort, this initiative will fund job training, apprenticeship programs, and workforce development strategies tailored to local industries. It will also connect Camden employers directly with jobseekers, aiming to boost local employment and reduce hiring barriers.

Community-Driven, Collaborative, and Measurable

This initiative was shaped through extensive listening sessions with Camden residents and community-based organizations. It emphasizes collaboration—not competition—among nonprofits, as well as shared evaluation and learning to ensure measurable impact.

Cooper and Virtua bring critical healthcare and workforce expertise to the table, reinforcing the initiative’s cross-sector strength.

“For 138 years, Cooper University Health Care has proudly served the residents of the City of Camden” said Kevin O’Dowd, co-CEO of Cooper University Health Care. “This important initiative is one more way Cooper continues to serve Camden’s residents beyond patient care. Cooper is proud to partner with committed, likeminded supporters to increase economic and socioeconomic opportunities for residents of our hometown.”

The Norcross family has partnered with the United Way for more than 50 years - first through George E. Norcross, Jr. and then carried on by his sons George E. Norcross, III and Philip A. Norcross. Cooper’s leadership in this initiative extends the Norcross family's involvement in impacting the lives of generations of Camden and South Jersey residents.

"Virtua Health is deeply committed to creating communities of wellness so that everyone can achieve the best possible quality of life," said Dennis W. Pullin, FACHE, president and CEO of Virtua Health. "By working collaboratively, we can be champions of humanity and help close the disparity gap for the residents of Camden."

In addition to co-chairs Cooper and Virtua, the Camden Community Uplift Initiative is supported by Holman, NFI, American Water, and PNC.



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A Call to Action

Though the initiative launches with \$5 million, United Way and its partners are actively seeking additional investments to reach the \$8 million funding goal.

“This is only the beginning,” said Golderer. “To build a Camden that works for everyone, we need individuals, corporations, and philanthropic partners to step up. Your support will not only create jobs and opportunity—it will create hope.”

Philanthropic partners and community members interested in supporting the Camden Community Uplift Initiative can contact emergingInitiatives@unitedforimpact.org to learn more and contribute.

About United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey

United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey is on a mission to end poverty and expand opportunity for all. By forging coalitions with business, government, and community organizations, we provide the skills and support people need to rise—and remain—above the poverty line. Serving Pennsylvania's Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties, and New Jersey's Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, and Cumberland counties, United Way leads solutions that deliver immediate relief and long-term achievement.

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