

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS VAN?

The Valley Assistance Network (VAN) is an outreach program of United Way of Northern Shenandoah Valley (UWNSV) that provides resources and referrals to people in need.

WHAT DO WE DO?

Through a coordinated network of services, we help people in crisis access information to improve their situation and reach financial stability.

WHY WAS VAN CREATED?

The program launched in October 2017 as a direct response to the Virginia ALICE® Report & UWNSV's Community Needs Assessment.

- **United Way NSV's Community Needs Assessment** key findings: Working families need help accessing resources and achieving financial stability.
- **ALICE® Project** findings: 11% of Virginians are living in poverty. Another 30% are ALICE, an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE® families work hard but struggle to afford the basic cost of living, including housing, food, childcare, healthcare and transportation.

HOW IS VAN FUNDED?

The salary of VAN's Director is supported by an endowment from UWNSV. All other operational costs, including our volunteer coordinator's salary, come from fundraising.

VAN applies for grants and appeals to the community for support through businesses, churches, civic clubs, etc.

WHY WOULD I DONATE TO VAN IF I CAN JUST DONATE TO UNITED WAY?

Donations to UWNSV's Community Impact Grant

program are distributed to local nonprofits through a competitive grant process. VAN is not eligible to apply. Individuals or businesses can designate a gift to VAN through United Way NSV via payroll deduction, re-occurring gifts or a one-time donation. Because of our fiscal efficiency, a \$500 gift can provide **STABILITY** for one family.

WHO PROVIDES OVERSIGHT?

VAN is guided by a Steering Committee made up of a diverse group of community leaders. UWNSV's Board of Directors provides support and guidance to ensure efficiency and sustainability.

WHAT MAKES VAN UNIQUE?

Here are just a few ways VAN is making an impact:

1. **We serve families holistically** - We ask questions about people's health, education, and financial stability needs and work to address the root causes. We provide wrap-around services to address multiple needs.
2. **We find creative solutions to our community's most pressing needs** - We mobilize when there is an unmet need. Examples include "Home for the Holidays" and the CODE Blue initiative.
 - VAN serves as the coordination center for Unite Us, a technology based platform to connect nonprofits, churches, and Valley Health – to track referrals and community-wide outcomes.
3. **Our success is driven by volunteers** - In 2018, volunteers logged 1,950 hours – a value of \$48,145. We utilize:
 - Resource Navigators to provide referrals and case management to help families in crisis.
 - Budget Coaches and Pathways Coaches help families on their journey to self-sufficiency.

HOW MANY PEOPLE DO YOU HELP?

In less than 2 years, VAN served more than **1,300 unique families**, made **4,705 Referrals** to community partners and **impacted 3,750 people!**

30% of people report being stable after receiving services. With additional support and increased funding, we can help more families reach **STABILITY**, and ultimately **FINANCIAL SECURITY**.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

VAN holds regular volunteer trainings for people who want to work directly with clients or behind the scenes. We are actively looking for unique fundraising ideas or beneficiary opportunities. Visit www.unitedwaynsv.org/van or Call Jennifer Hall to schedule a tour, today!