

## **UNION COUNTY INITIATIVE TO CATALYZE COMMUNITY-LED CHANGE**

*A Partnership of The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation and United Way of Union County  
with support from Honda*

The United Way of Union County, with support from Honda, is partnering with The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation to help Union County move forward. This initiative has three primary goals: (1) Take action on key issues that matter to people; (2) Strengthen Union County's civic culture so the community can accelerate and deepen its good work; and (3) Ensure Honda's investments create sustainable impact aligned with the shared aspirations and needs of the community.

At the heart of this initiative is the belief that by working together, the people of Union County can build a shared and hopeful path forward. Union County is vibrant and growing fast. Today, it faces a vital question: How will the community maintain the good things it loves while addressing the challenges of growth and change?

### **THE OPPORTUNITY**

In November 2023, The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation will release the report, *Moving Forward in Union County: Forging a Shared Path*, to help the community better understand how people across the county see and experience life here and how the community can strengthen its civic culture.

Union County finds itself at an important moment in its history. Meaningful efforts are already in motion across the county to make growth work for the area and build a better future. Now, it's time to double down. Union County can forge a shared path that meets people where they are, addresses issues that matter to them, and strengthens the community's civic culture. Forging this shared path means more residents and leaders need to turn outward toward one another. Furthermore, this work must not be seen as the responsibility of any single leader or organization, but rather of the entire community.

### **CATALYZING & UNLEASHING ACTION**

This initiative is designed to address specific issues while strengthening Union County's civic culture to foster an environment where people, organizations, and leaders work together in new ways. A similar initiative is underway in Logan County in order to spread this work across the region.

Building on *Moving Forward in Union County: Forging a Shared Path*, this initiative will catalyze longer-term change in the following ways:

- **Public Innovators Labs** – The Harwood Institute will host two in-person “Labs” for approximately 50 local leaders and residents. The Labs are a set of learning experiences that teach individuals the practice of Turning Outward so they can take action, create meaningful change, and unleash the community’s potential.
  - **Getting Started Lab – February 2024:** The first Lab will introduce participants to the Harwood approach and mindset of Turning Outward. Lab participants will learn how change happens in a community; how to discern where the community is starting; how to engage people in the community about what matters to them; and how to show up more intentionally in their work and lives.
  - **Unleashing Impact Lab – Late 2024:** The second Lab will help participants take intentional actions to unleash, grow, and spread a chain reaction of actions throughout their community. Lab participants will learn to strengthen their community’s civic culture; develop new ways to engage in ongoing learning; and stay grounded in the Turning Outward practice.
- **Learn and Apply Webinars** – The Harwood Institute provides a series of pre-recorded “Learn and Apply” webinars for the community to use at specific points throughout the initiative. These webinars reinforce the Turning Outward practice and expand on important topics to help teams deepen their learning and accelerate progress.
- **Coaching of Action Teams** – Harwood Certified Coaches will support three action teams made up of community leaders and residents who will apply the Harwood approach to take action on what matters to people in the community.
- **Workspaces** – Harwood Certified Coaches will design and lead three in-person workspaces for action teams, Lab participants, and other engaged community members and partners. The workspaces will promote the cross-fertilization of ideas, provide opportunities for troubleshooting, teach new areas of the practice, and accelerate and deepen the application of the practice.
- **Orientation Sessions** – The United Way of Union County will host orientation sessions to welcome interested community members and leaders to get up to speed on the Harwood approach and join the action teams.
- **Stories of Change** – Over the course of Year Two, The Harwood Institute will document stories of change for Union County that resemble the narratives in Rich Harwood’s book: *Unleashed: A Proven Way Communities Can Spread Change and Make Hope Real for All*. The Institute will work with local partners, Honda, and others in the area to share the story of change across the community.

## **TIMELINE**

This initiative will take place between November 2023 and December 2025, beginning with the post-report roundtables in November and the *Getting Started Lab* in February 2024. Coming out of *Getting Started*, Harwood's coaching of various action teams will begin. The second lab, *Unleashing Impact*, will be held in late 2024. Coaching and workspaces will take place throughout 2024 and 2025.

## **STEPPING FORWARD**

Local communities must shape and drive their own future. Union County needs you to step forward and make a contribution. If you are interested in learning more or getting involved directly, please contact Tessa Fite of United Way of Union County at [tessa.fite@unitedwayofunioncounty.org](mailto:tessa.fite@unitedwayofunioncounty.org) or Gabby Levet of The Harwood Institute at [glevet@theharwoodinstitute.org](mailto:glevet@theharwoodinstitute.org).

## **ABOUT THE PARTNERS**

The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization that for over 35 years has equipped people, organizations, communities, and networks with the tools to bridge divides, create a culture of shared responsibility, and strengthen civic capacities. The Harwood Institute's Turning Outward practice has spread to all 50 U.S. states and 40 countries. A growing network of thousands of Public Innovators have adopted the approach and made it their own.

The United Way of Union County has been a valued community partner since its founding in 1958. It is a local organization, guided by neighbors you know and volunteers who live and work right down the street. Its mission is to bring neighbors and resources together to improve lives in Union County, Ohio.

For more than 60 years in the U.S., Honda has been committed to making positive contributions to the communities where its associates live and work. Reflective of the company's values, Honda's five pillars of Corporate Social Responsibility are Education, Environment, Mobility, Traffic Safety, and Community. In Union County, Honda seeks to make investments that advance each of these areas and create sustainable impact aligned with the community's shared aspirations and needs.