

NEWS RELEASE

Apr. 13, 2020

Contact:
Lucas Stall
Public Affairs & Advocacy Manager
lucas.stall@unitedwaytoledo.org
(419) 254-4652 office
(765) 977-3712 mobile



United Way Opens Emergency Response Fund for Community Organizations

[TOLEDO, OH] – On Monday, April 13, United Way of Greater Toledo (UWGT) will formally request that community organizations, who are specifically working in the space of food insecurity, apply for an Emergency Relief Fund grant.

Grants will vary in quantity and size based on the request outlined in the application, which can be found at UnitedWayToledo.org/EmergencyFund. Singular grants will be capped at \$25,000 in size. The objective is to expand the applicant's capacity to serve community members, due to COVID-19.

"From April 13 to the 27, the team at United Way, along with key volunteers and funders will be closely reviewing proposals on a rolling-basis," said Wendy Pestrue, president & CEO of UWGT.

"Initially, our response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been around food insecurity in the Greater Toledo area. In the last 30 days alone, United Way 2-1-1 has received over 3,200 requests for food resources. With these statistics in mind, as well as listening to our fellow partners, we have concluded that this is an immediate point-of-focus."

Currently, UWGT has coordinated over 40,000 meal reservations for 18 Connecting Kids to Meals sites and eight Toledo Public Schools via its 2-1-1 system, as school closures across the state continue. UWGT has also packed 12,000 weekend snack bags for Connecting Kids to Meals, with an extra 12,000 to 15,000 weekend snack bags to be filled. Additionally, the organization has coordinated volunteers to help serve food at Connecting Kids to Meals sites.

UWGT volunteers have already accumulated 3,000 hours of community service in just three weeks.

"I am incredibly proud of United Way's quick response, but we had to do more. This is why we started the United Way Emergency Response Fund, which has already collected over \$300,000 because of our incredibly generous individual and corporate donors," said Pestrue.

The goal of the Emergency Response Fund is to address ongoing, emerging community needs as COVID-19 continues to impact every corner of UWGT's three-county footprint.

"This is just the first chapter of our response at United Way. Unfortunately, food is the most emerging need, but we cannot be absorbed in that one area. We have to get resources out to those who can improve food security through new or existing programs, so that we can focus on the next chapter of community needs and then the chapter after that," Pestrue said.

"Rental eviction and mortgage foreclosure moratoriums can't last forever. Unemployment benefits can only take you so far before you begin feeling that financial stress. The list goes on, so we must keep planning. We have no idea how long this catastrophe could truly last."

UWGT hopes to invest \$100,000 in total to tackle food insecurity, as pantries and meal service entities manage unprecedented numbers of those seeking nutrition resources. There is not a determined timeline for a second-round of grants, as studies at UWGT will continue for the next topic area.

If individuals would like to contribute to the Emergency Response Fund, they can visit UnitedWayToledo.org/Donate.

###