

United
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STRONG!



United Way of Greater Toledo
Serving Lucas, Wood
& Ottawa counties

UNITED
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COVID-19 RESPONSE REPORT



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In March 2020, United Way of Greater Toledo (UWGT) began strategizing with local partners as the COVID-19 virus quickly spread across the community, impacting the health and financial well-being of every person. Since then, United Way has rerouted its day-to-day operations to meet the mounting needs of individuals, children and families across Lucas, Ottawa and Wood counties.

The following report outlines UWGT's rapid response to the pandemic from March 2020 - March 2021.

UNITED WAY 2-1-1

104,398 CONTACTS

March 2020 - March 2021

Up 35% compared to the previous year



VACCINATION REGISTRATION ASSISTANCE

12,000+

Referrals provided for vaccine registration, pre-registration and vaccine information



HOLIDAY ASSISTANCE

1,230

Total persons served across Lucas, Ottawa and Wood counties.

62 individuals were age 60+;

853 individuals were under age 18



333 FAMILIES & 23 INDIVIDUALS

Received \$50-\$150 gift cards

COVID RELIEF ASSISTANCE

Partnered with Lucas County Job and Family Services to screen and verify qualifications of

907 HOUSEHOLDS

for direct financial assistance through PRC (Prevention, Retention, Contingency funding)

\$709,250

Payments processed in total to families impacted by COVID-19



OUTREACH

VOLUNTEER EFFORTS

2,000+

Volunteers mobilized



22,000+

Volunteer hours with an approximate value of

\$598,400*

**Estimated value of volunteer time over the past 12 months*

**Value of a volunteer hour calculated per Independent Sector data as of 7/21/20*



FEEDING STUDENTS IN NEED

55,000

Student meal reservations made while schools were closed

100,000+

Snack kits assembled for children in need



INFORMATION SHARING WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

18

Formal touchpoints with federal, state and local legislators to discuss UWGT's response efforts, and to express our support for federal and state relief on behalf of childcare providers



FUNDRAISING

EMERGENCY RESPONSE & FUNDRAISING

\$1.1 MILLION

Raised for Emergency Response Fund

\$8.2 MILLION+

Annually fundraised, in a traditional year, for community investments

\$450,000+

Donated in emergency support to 28 community organizations responding to the pandemic

27,625 PEOPLE

Supported through 28 programs in three counties



VIRTUAL TUTORING

100+

Volunteers connected to virtual tutoring opportunities to assist students with at-home learning



EDUCATION

\$25,000

Awarded to purchase 60 Google Chromebooks and 20 internet hotspots for students



4,000

Virtual Learning School Supply Kits distributed, with help from community partners



UNITED WAY 2-1-1

Throughout the past year, United Way 2-1-1, which serves Lucas, Ottawa and Wood counties, became a vital resource, helping community members in need. The free, confidential referral and information resource connects people of all ages 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year with local organizations that provide critical health and human services. To speak with a community resource advisor, an individual must simply dial two, one, one; text their zip code to 898-211; or instant message online at 211NWO.org.



From March 1, 2020 – March 1, 2021, UWGT 2-1-1 received more than 104,398 contacts from individuals seeking aid, an increase of 35% compared to the same period in 2019.

The top referrals provided include housing, food, healthcare services related to COVID-19, utility assistance, clothing and free tax preparation services.

COVID Relief Assistance

The pandemic led to mass unemployment locally, increasing financial instability for families, and generated great confusion on where to find proper COVID-19 health resources.

United Way 2-1-1 became a vital program for residents across our three counties in locating imperative health information, pre-registering for vaccine appointments and scheduling vaccine appointments for the most vulnerable. Our 2-1-1 Community Resource Advisors quickly developed partnerships with local health departments and served as an invaluable resource, at times answering thousands of calls weekly, assisting eligible individuals in receiving a vaccine.



United Way 2-1-1 also partnered with Lucas County Job and Family Services to screen and verify qualifications of 907 households for direct financial assistance through PRC (Prevention, Retention, Contingency funding) and facilitated \$709,250 in payments to families impacted by COVID-19.

Historically, United Way 2-1-1 was a service only accessible via phone and an online database. In 2019, an improved 2-1-1 database with instant message and text message capabilities was launched. The increase of accessibility to 2-1-1 was imperative in providing access and resources to all who needed support amid the pandemic.

Vaccination Registration Assistance

Distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine is critical to restoring financial and economic health for individuals and that of the community.

In late 2020, the Lucas County Health Department asked UWGT to help facilitate pre-registration of the vaccine and answer non-medical community questions through 2-1-1. This was done proactively to ensure the department was not overwhelmed and the community had access to the support they deserve.

Within the first 30 days of 2021, UWGT trained 2-1-1 Community Resource Advisors (CRAs) in Lucas, Ottawa and Wood counties to answer technical questions about pre-registration forms, disseminate reliable information to individuals with questions on behalf of the health department, and assist with vaccine pre-registrations.

Due to the dramatic increase in call volume, 2-1-1 ramped up staffing with the hiring of eight additional CRAs. UWGT also trained volunteers to assist with non-medical scheduling calls and worked to implement a referral system for individuals in need of transportation to vaccination sites.



UWGT provided 12,000+ referrals for vaccine registration, pre-registration and vaccine information

Through 2-1-1's vaccination assistance, UWGT is also collecting demographic information from callers, such as zip code, age and gender identity. This information helps the health department better understand the demographic of callers and where additional communication and education may be required.

Holiday Gift Card Assistance

In early November 2020, when local agencies generally update United Way 2-1-1 with their annual holiday resources, the team recognized there were fewer programs available. Many providers had limited capacity to serve, as demand had greatly increased, and holiday resources were exhausted over the summer/fall.




To help fill the gap, UWGT utilized \$30,000 in Emergency Response Fund dollars, plus approximately \$6,000 in gifts from private donors, to provide \$50-\$150 gift cards for food, gifts and holiday necessities to 333 families and 23 individuals.



FUNDRAISING

Knowing available monies were at a premium and the number of annual donations might decrease with so many people out of work, UWGT put a greater emphasis on fundraising efforts to ensure vital community programs continued without the threat of pause.

 Throughout the pandemic, UWGT raised and leveraged **\$1.1 million** specifically for its **Emergency Response Fund (ERF)**.

UWGT was also awarded \$250,000 in Community Development Block Grants from the City of Toledo for snack kit supplies for children and food and hygiene supplies, and worked with service provider subgrantees and emergency operations center members advising on food insecurity trends across the community.

Emergency Response Fund

In April, UWGT developed its ERF to help community organizations working to aid those hit hardest by the effects of the pandemic. Money for the fund comes from UWGT's individual and corporate partners, and is used to support nonprofit organizations / local programs that are being stretched beyond their capacities due to growing needs throughout the community.

Specific partnerships to aid fundraising included partnering with Buckeye Broadband for "419 Day," which raised more than \$20,000 for the ERF, and featured UWGT's response to the pandemic across many local media outlets.

 Funds allocated for the ERF allowed UWGT to assist an estimated **27,625 people** (based on current reports) in Lucas, Ottawa and Wood counties by giving grants to **28 organizations** in areas such as food insecurity and financial support for families.

Organizations that received funding included Toledo Public Schools, Mobile Meals of Toledo, Inc., YMCA of Greater Toledo and others. Singular grants were capped at \$25,000.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Coordination

Like in many communities, personal protective equipment (PPE) was desperately needed for frontline workers, and we were facing a shortage here in Northwest Ohio. It was evident that creative solutions would be necessary to establish a repository of supplies and an inventory dashboarding system to assist in managing the PPE needs of our community.

UWGT acted quickly with other partners to support the Lucas County Emergency Operations Center to address this concern. What evolved from this plan is a United Way Supply Chain Advisory Committee, which will serve as a community asset, offering a unique support system for addressing essential product shortages for years to come.

- UWGT coordinated with local partners to establish a warehousing effort for PPE in early April 2020
- Formalized an independent supply chain committee at UWGT to support pandemic PPE needs, with supply chain experts from large, multinational organizations, as well as local universities
- The UWGT Supply Chain Advisory Committee ultimately expanded its scope to food, hygiene and school supply requests, in addition to PPE
- The UWGT Supply Chain Advisory Committee has been featured as an innovative partnership at the “Northeast Decision Sciences Conference” and the research/logistics of this committee has been published in trade and academic journals



OUTREACH


Through its community impact initiatives, UWGT provides funding to support local programs that provide assistance in the areas of education, financial stability, health and housing. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the calls for support increased and UWGT responded.

The following are highlights of UWGT's community impact programs.

Activating Volunteers

In 2020, our community faced the largest public health crisis of our lifetime. While individuals within the community faced food insecurity and joblessness, thousands of volunteers put themselves at risk to help. Many of these people are repeat volunteers, showing the effectiveness of UWGT's expanded communication strategy.

Through social media platforms, email blasts and advocacy blog posts, UWGT led volunteer planning, recruitment and deployment to help those in need, and UWGT went to great lengths to ensure volunteers were working in safe, socially distanced environments.

 **More than 2,000 volunteers** have served during the pandemic, resulting in more than **22,000 volunteer hours**. The approximate value of time volunteers have given since **March 2020 is \$598,400**.



Volunteer efforts included COVID-19 testing and vaccination efforts, snack kit building, breakfast meal kit builds for first responders in quarantine, family food box/bag assembly and distribution, tutoring both virtual and in-person, grounds cleanups, school supply kit builds, hygiene kit builds and more.

To help ensure the safety of both volunteers and staff, UWGT established screening protocols, mask mandates and social distancing guidelines when inside the building and implemented building volume tracking to ensure capacity was not exceeded. For employees, the organization introduced a remote working platform to further prioritize safety and health.

Lastly, UWGT also partnered with local entities that required a smaller volunteer base, but still had a huge impact. For example, we assisted the Toledo Lucas County Public Library for their “Democracy Days” initiative in the fall of 2020. Here, UWGT signed up 75 volunteers to handle 175 shifts over three consecutive Saturdays, where they helped individuals register to vote and complete their 2020 Census.



Feeding Students in Need

When schools closed across Northwest Ohio on March 13, 2020, there was an urgent need to ensure children who relied on free or reduced-cost meals at school did not go hungry.

Within three days of schools closing, UWGT created a registration process flow that allowed parents and guardians to reserve free meals at eight sites established by Toledo Public Schools, and 19 sites established by Connecting Kids to Meals across Toledo, by calling or texting United Way 2-1-1.



From March to July, 2-1-1 coordinated **55,000 meal reservations** and have assembled more than **100,000 snack kits** since March 2020.

UWGT's team also coordinated volunteer efforts to support all meal distribution sites and snack kit builds.

- 75 volunteers daily from March through early September 2020 for meal distribution
- 40 - 100 volunteers per week assembled 100,000+ snack kits at UWGT since March 2020

Virtual Tutoring

With at-home learning taking a great toll on working parents, local volunteers were sought to assist students. This was critical in ensuring that kids did not fall behind in their studies and kept up with coursework.



More than **100 volunteers** were connected to virtual tutoring opportunities.





Education Support

In the wake of the pandemic, Toledo Public Schools had to develop strategies to remotely teach more than 23,000 students across the district.



In June 2020, in preparation for the new school year, UWGT's Digital Strategy Committee granted a private gift of **\$25,000** to Toledo Public Schools for the purchase of **60 Google Chromebooks** and **20 internet hotspots** as part of a grant through the ERF.

UWGT organized community partners to pack 4,000 Virtual Learning School Supply Kits for students. These kits, in addition to 600 backpacks, were distributed through partnerships with Kinship Navigator (Area Office on Aging), Lucas County Children Services, Sylvania Area Family Services, The Salvation Army and Toledo Public Schools.

Information Sharing with Elected Officials

As the pandemic continued throughout the year, UWGT strived to elevate the concerns of our partners and community members to local, state and federally elected officials.



We had **18 formal touchpoints** with federal and state legislators to discuss response efforts.

UWGT also organized four virtual meetings with federally elected officials and childcare advocates, childcare providers and corporate leaders to support the Childcare is Essential Act, and issued and sent countless calls, emails and materials to elected officials.

UWGT also facilitated a panel diving into the realities of navigating childcare during the pandemic. The panel featured childcare providers, parents and HR perspectives who shared challenges and opportunities and encouraged federal legislators to increase the funding line-item for childcare in the second of the proposed COVID-19 economic relief packages.

CONCLUSION

While this report reflects UWGT's COVID-19 response efforts, work is still underway to help those in need navigate this challenging time.



We will continue to serve as a **resource** and **ally** to the people of Lucas, Ottawa and Wood counties and look for opportunities to provide support.