

United Way in times of crisis

United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI) has a 94-year history of serving the Rhode Island community. Through fires, floods, recessions and other emergencies, we roll up our sleeves and partner with the business community, state agencies, nonprofit partners, and countless individual donors and volunteers to put our community first, and to meet the most urgent of needs.

This time will be no different. We will unite, we will overcome.

211

Our **211 Call Center** is assisting the R.I. Department of Health with call center support. In the first week of the crisis, we have spoken with more than 1,000 Rhode Islanders, helping individuals find meals for their families, offering information on temporary unemployment benefits, and resources for utility assistance. As new services in response to COVID-19 become available, our 211 team is in contact with multiple agencies across the state, and is ready to meet a growing number of calls with real-time information.

Nonprofit survey

We've polled the nonprofit community formally and informally, and the news is sobering. We are hearing about major disruption in operations and services, an urgent need for financial assistance and supplies, and increasing anxiety about the days ahead. Urgently needed:

- Grocery gift cards and meals for low income families with limited food supplies.
- Internet access, smart devices, laptops and technical support to enable remote work.
- Cleaning supplies, sanitizers, gloves and masks for frontline, direct service employees.
- Diapers, basic medical supplies, and pet food for family service organizations.
- Utility relief and rental assistance to support displaced workers.

COVID-19 Response Fund at United Way

United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI) and **The Rhode Island Foundation** announce the *Rhode Island COVID-19 Response Fund*, together having already raised \$1.5 million. The fund will support the needs of local nonprofits that provide direct service in the community, and whose programs are impacted by COVID-19 response efforts.

UWRI and the CVS Health Foundation have each contributed lead gifts, and other corporate leaders have made significant gifts including BankNewport, as well as Amica, Bank of America, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island, Centreville Bank, FM Global, Hasbro, Inc., National Grid, Webster Bank, StrategicPoint Investors, and Neighborhood Health Plan of RI.

As the crisis' full implication to the state's nonprofit community is unknown, additional contributions are needed and can be made directly to either UWRI or The Rhode Island Foundation.

How the fund works

Fundraising efforts are being coordinated with the Rhode Island Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund. Our goal is to ensure that the nonprofit organizations most impacted by the crisis have the resources they need to meet the most urgent needs of our community.

Community members can support the critical work of direct service nonprofits by making gifts online at [UWRI.org \(https://uwriweb.org/Covid19Fund\)](https://uwriweb.org/Covid19Fund) by check, through a United Way MyFund account, or other donor advised fund or by texting RICOVID19 to 51555.

- In alignment with United Way gift policies, funds cannot be distributed to individuals.
- United Way will designate funds to local direct service agencies who demonstrate need as a result of the COVID19 Pandemic.

Additional assistance opportunities

In addition to raising new funds, UWRI will work with existing grantees to adjust the terms of their grants so that funds can be used to support operations during this time of crisis.

The Good Neighbor Energy Fund will also expand its reach, allowing members of the community impacted by COVID-19 to apply for utility assistance. Applications for assistance can be completed at all local Community Action Programs.

Inquires

For interested philanthropic and business partners, please contact Executive Vice President, Chief Development Officer Brooke Havens at brooke.havens@uwri.org or 444-0625.

For nonprofits interested in applying for funds, please contact Director of Grants and Strategic Initiatives, Larry Warner at larry.warner@uwri.org or 401-444-0660.