United Way Disaster Relief Fund FAQ - COVID-19

How will my gift help?

Your gift will be deployed to help those in our community who are most vulnerable to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the ALICE population (Asset Limited, Income Constrained,Employed). Disaster Relief Fund dollars are directed to 501c3 organizations for use that may include direct services related to COVID-19, or coordination of relief efforts to streamline and accelerate, and sustain the response.

What kinds of things will be funded?

Needs are being assessed every day by emergency response consortiums in Battle Creek and Kalamazoo. Some of the areas initially identified include basic needs such as access to food, hygiene items, and emergency child care.

Who decides where the money goes?

Emergency response consortiums are currently meeting via teleconference weekly to identify needs. The consortium meetings have included United Way staff, 2-1-1 staff, government, nonprofit organizations, foundations, and city and school officials. Funding decisions are then made by review teams. In Kalamazoo, the team includes representatives from United Way BCKR, Kalamazoo Community Foundation, the City of Kalamazoo, and the Community Resilience Program Manager. In Battle Creek, UWBCKR staff and the Community Resilience Program Manager make up the team. For more information, email communityimpact@uwbckr.org.

How can people access the fund?

We encourage individuals in need of assistance to dial 2-1-1. This is our local hotline connecting people to services and resources to meet basic needs. Our partners at Gryphon Place, which houses 2-1-1, are available 24/7. Nonprofit organizations with questions about the fund should email communityimpact@uwbckr.org.

Can I designate my donation to Battle Creek or Kalamazoo?

Yes. You may select either Battle Creek or Kalamazoo when you make a donation through changethestory.org/disaster-relief. Please know, however, that an undesignated gift allows for much more flexibility in prioritizing the most urgent needs across both communities.

What is your fundraising goal?

Needs are emerging as circumstances around the pandemic change every day. We know already from initial outreach and emergency response consortium meetings in that the need will be great. We’re profoundly grateful for caring individuals, companies and foundations that have contributed more than $850,000 in just the first five days. At the same time, we know from previous disaster such as the 2018 flood that once we start moving those dollars into response activities, the funds will go quickly.

How do I help?

Financial contributions can be made online at changethestory.org/disaster-relief. You can also volunteer. One easy way to find volunteer opportunities is to dial 2-1-1. You can also visit https://bit.ly/3a6dlrX if you want to volunteer in Kalamazoo, and https://bit.ly/3a7tmp7 for Battle Creek opportunities.