



United Way of
Benton & Franklin Counties

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United Way announces first awards for local COVID-19 support

The local grants support nonprofits providing food during this emergency

KENNEWICK, Wash—United Way of Benton & Franklin Counties has awarded the first grants from its dedicated COVID-19 Community Response Fund, established to support local nonprofits providing food and childcare during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Senior Life Resources Northwest](#) will receive \$3,000 to provide essential supplies and basic groceries to vulnerable, low-income seniors as part of the Meals on Wheels program. Meals on Wheels has had to reduce meal distribution because of concerns about exposure to vulnerable clients and a lack of available products and supplies, while simultaneously facing an increased need for meals for vulnerable populations. This grant will supply 120 grocery bags, filled with household basics, for local seniors in need. Kristi Thien, Nutrition Services Director, said “Thank you for your support of Meals on Wheels and our basic groceries project. We are so grateful to count United Way as one of our community partners!”

[The Salvation Army](#) will receive \$3,500 to provide food to low-income families. The Salvation Army served more than twice as many people meals and food boxes during the month of March as they did in February. According to Julia Thomas, Business Administrator, they will use this grant “toward purchasing 50 average size food boxes assisting 150-250 people (dependent on family size).”

UWBFCO launched the COVID-19 Community Response Fund on March 19. Within a week, donations had reached more than \$6,000. “And in just three days, we received eight grant requests for urgently needed food and childcare support totaling \$82,000,” said LoAnn Ayers, President and CEO. “Our local United Way will continue to award grants on a rolling basis as additional donations are received.” Local nonprofits can see the criteria and apply at www.uwbfc.org/covid-19-rapid-response-funding.

“I am grateful to those in our community who supported the COVID-19 relief fund to help feed those in need, but we must continue,” said United Way Board Chair Rick Holmes. “Hunger never ends and is more important now than ever for those who are vulnerable. Every dollar we can provide will meet the continuing needs of our community.”

Donations to the local United Way COVID-19 Community Response Fund can be made at <https://give.uwbfc.org/givenow>

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About [United Way of Benton & Franklin Counties](#)

United Way of Benton and Franklin Counties strives for a community where all individuals and families achieve their potential through education, financial stability and healthy lives. We partner with local nonprofits, businesses, and government and social service agencies to address our community's greatest needs and build pathways for individuals and families to independence and happiness.