

COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund grant application opens and initial funding commitments announced

Bloomington, Ind. -- The COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund, recently launched by United Way of Monroe County and partners, announces next steps in the coordinated effort to direct funds towards basic needs and emergency services.

To date, the Relief Fund has received \$295,508 in community donations from individuals, businesses, local government, and foundations. In addition to initial funding partners announced March 17th, Hoosier Energy and Tim Ellis Realtors have pledged corporate support.

Individual donations have reached \$41,508. Thanks to the generosity of the Bloomington Health Foundation, a \$25,000 match incentive has been reached, doubling the impact of numerous individual gifts.

The priorities of the Relief Fund include:

- 1) **sustaining operations and levels of service** of area nonprofits meeting community members' basic needs;
- 2) **developing safe, temporary residential programs for at-risk individuals** currently unsheltered, or in mass shelters or group homes;
- 3) **funding temporary staffing or volunteer mobilization efforts** in response to loss of volunteer base critical to daily operations; and
- 4) increasing capacity of **local food security systems and financial assistance programs** at area townships and nonprofits

The Relief Fund coordinating committee, which includes Jon Barada of the Bloomington Health Foundation, Tina Peterson of the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County, and Efrat Feferman of United Way of Monroe County, has made initial funding commitments aligned with these priorities. A grant of \$50,000 was made to Hoosier Hills Food Bank in order to support mass purchasing of food staples. Up to \$70,000 is committed to Shalom Community Center, New Hope Family Shelter, Wheeler Mission, Middle Way House, and the Monroe County Health Department for coordinating and securing safe isolation shelter spaces for individuals currently in mass shelters, a resource previously unavailable in our community.

The Phase 1 application for grants is being released on Monday, March 23, 2020, with an application deadline of Thursday, March 26th at noon. Representatives from the City of Bloomington, Monroe County Government, and IU School of Public Health will also advise the committee on grantmaking.

The coordinating committee continues to work on a unified comprehensive relief and recovery plan for the community, to support needs for both the short-term and long-term.

Organizations serving the basic needs of Monroe, Owen, and Greene counties interested in applying for funding in Phase 1 may complete the application now available at www.monroeunitedway.org/COVIDRelief.

Individuals in need of services including food, shelter, childcare, financial assistance, and more are encouraged to search www.helpingbloomingtonmonroe.org or to call 2-1-1 to connect to the right help.

Community-wide resources and updates are being centralized at www.monroecounty-covid-19.org by the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce in partnership with a cross-sector coalition of partners.

Individuals may text **COVIDRELIEF2020 to 44-321** or visit www.monroeunitedway.org/COVIDRelief to make a contribution to the Emergency Relief Fund.

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About United Way of Monroe County: United Way of Monroe County is a nonprofit organization that improves people's lives by addressing critical needs today and working to reduce those needs tomorrow. Through its Community Action Fund and grant initiatives, United Way works with 24 member agencies and community partners to ensure families have opportunities and everyone can meet basic living needs.

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In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, United Way of Monroe County launched the Emergency Relief Fund to support critical basic needs in Monroe, Owen, and Greene counties.

Donate to the Emergency Relief Fund

