United Way and Wabash Valley Community Foundation

Launch Wabash Valley COVID-19 Relief Fund

Terre Haute – Citing the strength in working together, the United Way of the Wabash Valley and the Wabash Valley Community Foundation today jointly launched a COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund to support immediate economic stability and basic needs in Vigo, Clay, Parke, Sullivan, and Vermillion counties in Indiana and Clark County in Illinois in light of the anticipated impact of the current pandemic.

The relief fund will launch with $100,000. This includes $50,000 committed by United Way and $50,000 from the Community Foundation. Both organizations are also committing an additional $50,000 each ($100,000 total) as a matching challenge grant for the community. The organizations will reach out to corporate partners, individual philanthropists, foundations and community members seeking further support that will be matched up to the additional $100,000. Through this effort, both organizations hope the fund can quickly grow to $300,000 or more.

“Our organizations know many people in our community were already one missed paycheck away from financial crisis, and we know that this pandemic is creating so much additional stress,” explained Richard Payonk, Executive Director of the United Way of the Wabash Valley. “In these uncertain times, we need to work together and convene our community to address these urgent needs. We will take a collaborative listening and evolving approach to understand the community’s real-time developing needs and then direct financial help where needed most.”

“The purpose of this fund is to quickly and effectively grant resources to community-based organizations best positioned to meet the emerging needs resulting from this crisis,” explained Beth Tevlin, Executive Director for Wabash Valley Community Foundation. “The funds will go to any organization including but not limited to healthcare, education, business or non-profit, that understand the need and can support local residents and families who are most affected by emerging health, economic, and social impacts of the COVID-19 virus.” While the fund will not be providing grants to individuals, Tevlin explained that it will be funding non-profits or other entities, who can then provide people and families with services and support.
The United Way will be sending out today a community-wide survey to all possible stakeholders with direct understanding of the economic impact and need the COVID-19 pandemic is causing locally. From those responses, they will convene weekly virtual listening sessions to keep a real-time understanding of the actual community needs as the impact continues in the community.

Payonk explained, “we are working hard to develop the overall process to ensure the right infrastructure is in place to meet the needs of people in the Valley as quickly as possible. Supporters and donors to the relief fund can expect the same transparency and stewardship you’ve come to expect from both of our organizations.” More information will be released in the coming days about how organizations can simply and quickly request emergency funds and how disbursements will be managed.

This week, both the United Way and Community Foundation has received numerous calls from local nonprofit entities regarding the challenges faced due to cancelled fundraisers, declining participation and immediate shifts in daily operations. The Community Foundation has provided emergency grants to Clay County YMCA, Northeast School Corporation and Southwest School Corporation for food insecurity programs in Clay and Sullivan counties, respectively. Additionally, the Community Foundation has formulated a separate component in the form of a Rapid Response grant process to address issues related to COVID-19. This will allow hospitals, emergency management offices, federally qualified health centers and local law enforcement in Clay, Sullivan and Vigo counties to submit requests for grants up to $5,000.

“The Wabash Valley is a very caring community,” said Tevlin, “and we wanted to give the entire community the chance to help their neighbors during these uncertain times. The power of many organizations and community members working together is needed now more than ever in order to address this crisis.”

The organizations have stated that all money that is donated will remain in the Wabash Valley and can be designated to specific-county use. No administrative fees will be charged, so 100% of the donations will flow into our local community. If community members are interested in donating to the fund please visit uwwv.org/covid or wvcf.org/covid. Also, corporate partners and foundations seeking to be partners in the fund can reach out to Danielle Isbell at disbell@uwwv.org or Beth Tevlin at beth@wvcf.org.

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United Way of the Wabash Valley is an organization looking to go beyond temporary fixes to create lasting change in our communities throughout our six-county region. By bringing together volunteers, companies, and organizations focused on innovative solutions, we impact thousands of lives every year.
right here in the Wabash Valley. Our new bold goal is to move 10,000 local families out of financial struggles. For more information, please visit, www.uwwv.org.

The Wabash Valley Community Foundation is a tax-exempt public charity created by and for the people in the Wabash Valley. The Community Foundation enables people with philanthropic interests to easily and effectively support the organizations and issues they care about – immediately or through their estate plans. Donors may give to existing funds or establish a charitable fund at the Community Foundation by contributing a variety of assets. For more information on the Community Foundation, please contact 812.232.2234 or visit www.wvcf.org.

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