



How we've responded to
COVID-19
 MARCH – JUNE 2020

United Way of
 Missoula County



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412 W. Alder Street
 Missoula, MT 59802

Thank you!
 Your gift is helping—here's how.

United Way of Missoula County has responded on many fronts to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our **COVID-19 Emergency Assistance Fund**—created principally to assist displaced service and tip-dependent gig economy workers who are jobless, temporarily out of work or working greatly reduced hours—has distributed more than \$330,000 to date in the form of one-time grants of up to \$400 per person. These grants quickly provided critical support to individuals with few resources – food service workers, bartenders, hair stylists, housekeepers and others – who faced challenges accessing unemployment benefits or who were ineligible for those benefits.

COVID-19 Emergency Assistance Fund



The Fund also disbursed **grants of \$5,000 each to seven longtime, trusted partners** working closely with populations most affected, experiencing increased demands: Child Care Resources, Human Resource Council, Missoula Aging Services, YWCA of Missoula, Soft Landing Missoula, the Poverello Center, and the Zootown Arts Community Center.

\$5,000 grant recipients



With funding from Providence St. Patrick Hospital and Headwaters Foundation, United Way created a **Child Care Reimbursement Fund** (\$10,000) to reimburse dozens of child-care facilities for extra expenses they are incurring as they provide care during the pandemic (cleaning supplies, extra pay due to new guidelines about caregiver-child ratios, for example). We also received a \$50,000 child-care grant from Headwaters Foundation, most of which we deployed to help Missoula Family YMCA and Boys & Girls Club of Missoula defray the costs of providing child care to the children of essential workers. Additionally, with funding from Missoula County, we created a \$17,600 **Child Care Stabilization Fund** to support child-care providers at risk of closing.

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\$10,000

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Thanks to funding from Wells Fargo and Missoula County, we created a **Flexible Housing-Assistance Fund** (\$30,000) to increase agencies' ability during the pandemic to support people in immediate need of safety and shelter by connecting them to safe, long-term housing options. This includes providing rental assistance to households that are literally homeless and/or fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence. We started this fund after seeing caseworkers and frontline staff "jumping through hoops" to determine which clients qualified for which forms of public funding to help resolve their housing issues.



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United Way is the **county's official drop-off location for homemade masks**, which we collect, launder, and distribute to healthcare organizations, nursing homes, group homes, the detention center, Mountain Line bus line, and other organizations employing essential workers. We have distributed more than 1,000 masks to date, and the demand is growing.



more than
1,000
masks
distributed

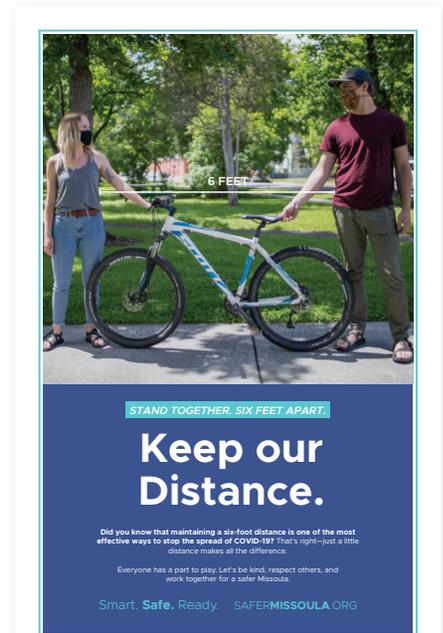
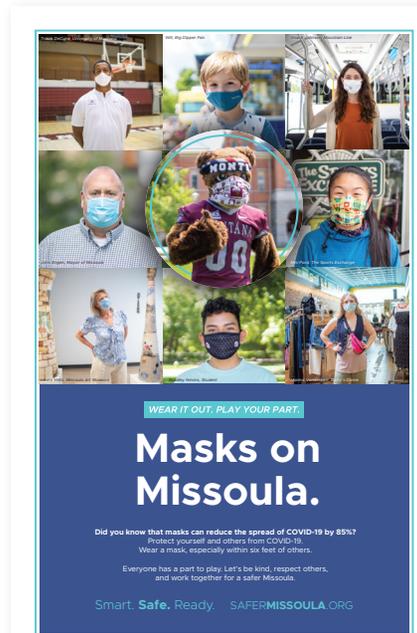
We chair or serve on several **Missoula County task forces** as part of the county's official COVID-19 response: Economic Development, Volunteers and Fundraising, Mental Health, and Emergency Child Care. Through our Zero to Five Missoula initiative, United Way is also leading efforts to examine what child care for school-age children might look like, if area schools are unable to reopen fully this fall.

United Way staff also played leadership roles in other COVID-19 response efforts:

- Missoula County's **COVID-19 Reopening Working Group**, which developed reopening recommendations to the health department for Phases 2 and 3 of Missoula County's COVID-19 recovery process.
- **Governor Bullock's COVID-19 Recovery Task Force** (as an alternate), which advised Governor Steve Bullock on how Montana should allocate the \$1.25 billion in federal funding disbursed to Montana for COVID-19 relief.
- An 8-week **"COVID Collaboration"** panel on "A New Angle," University of Montana Marketing professor Justin Angle's popular podcast. The panel updated listeners each Monday on the impact of COVID-19 on our community.

Our ongoing work includes leading roles in the following:

Smart.Safe. Ready (SaferMissoula.org), a professionally produced multi-platform messaging campaign, led by Destination Missoula, Missoula Economic Partnership, and United Way, to encourage social distancing and mask wearing.





United Way participates in the **Montana Nonprofit Association's Rapid Response Task Force**, a statewide group that meets weekly to keep the governor's office and Department of Health and Human Services informed of the Montana nonprofit sector's status and needs during the pandemic.



United Way's volunteermisoula.org website is the official site linking nonprofits that have volunteer needs with people who are available to fill those needs. Our **Missoula Nonprofit Center** collects and publicizes the online events and activities of our 100 nonprofit members, including creative educational and arts programs to help with home-schooling. Via Zoom, we also hosted a workshop on new-donor retention and "CEO Happy Hours" for nonprofit leaders, giving them a forum to share experiences and ask for advice.

Throughout the pandemic, our **Project Tomorrow Montana** has consistently communicated the best available information to help community members struggling with isolation, social distancing, and mental health crises. PTMT continues to promote and successfully advocate for the establishment of Western Montana Mental Health Center's Crisis Line, Missoula County Mobile Crisis Units, and the future establishment of National Suicide Prevention Lifeline accreditation in Missoula.



Through "**Montana Tech Giving Back**," a partnership with the Montana High Tech Alliance, Missoula Nonprofit Center is also serving as a hub to link nonprofits, schools and local government with tech companies of all sizes. Our goal is to develop and translate into action strategies that can transform systems and solve problems highlighted and/or exacerbated by the pandemic.

We are proud of our United Way's prompt, effective, and thorough response to the pandemic. For a list of generous donors who made this possible, please visit MissoulaUnitedWay.org/COVIDdonors.

What we heard from COVID-19 Emergency Assistance Fund recipients

(names used with permission)

"Thank you for helping me pay my rent and take some of the stress away."

"Your support helped me and made me feel connected to the larger community."

A note from Dave & Troy Erickson, older Missoulians who missed out on five weeks of selling their hand-made items at the winter farmer's market, and were able to use their relief money to buy gas and groceries: **"Thank you for this amazing blessing!"**

A note from Chris McAdams, a photographer and river guide, **"I was able to put gas in my truck and buy groceries."**

Local farmer Lori Parr (known as "Lavender Lori" to her customers), said, **"Thank you from the bottom of my heart. It was truly such a great kindness to start off this very weird time. I feel like knowing United Way cared about me kept it all in a positive light."**