

United Way Missoula County
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For Immediate Release

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HELP MISSOULIANS STAY WARM DURING ARCTIC BLAST

As bitter winter temperatures descend upon western Montana, United Way of Missoula County offers two ways to help those facing the extreme cold head-on.

United Way is at the center of Missoula County's emergency and disaster response, and has often used its resources to help when Missoulians face emergencies. "We expect there may be a need for our **emergency and disaster fund** as our shelters work tirelessly to find more space in this extreme cold," said Susan Hay Patrick, United Way C.E.O. "Our disaster and emergency fund allows us to respond immediately when needed. We're working closely with the Poverello Center, the City of Missoula, Missoula County, and nonprofit and faith partners to determine needs for staffing and other resources that United Way could support in this weather emergency."

Although the current community priority is emergency winter shelter, United Way focuses year-round on preventing homelessness. "Our **Housing Solutions Fund** is our community's most flexible, successful way to address and prevent homelessness," said Eric Legvold, United Way's director of community impact. "Through the HSF, caseworkers can access funds to provide exactly the help their clients need. The causes of homelessness are as varied as unhoused people themselves, and we've found that a small amount of money can prevent homelessness for about 80% of the people using the fund, so supporting it represents a really effective investment. The HFS can play a critical role in keeping people housed or getting them into housing, which can literally be life-saving in extreme cold."

"While we're working diligently to help people right now, we know the real solution to homelessness is housing, so we continue to partner with many public and private-sector agencies to focus on long-term work," added Hay Patrick. "If people can help this weekend, a gift to United Way's Housing Solutions Fund or our Disaster and Emergency Fund will ensure we can take care of our neighbors when they need it most."

Donations may be made online at MissoulaUnitedWay.org.

ABOUT UNITED WAY OF MISSOULA COUNTY

United Way of Missoula County brings people together to identify problems and craft creative solutions that change lives and build a stronger community for everyone. We operate eight collective-impact community programs and serve as the fiscal sponsor for three groups:

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Montana Black Collective Missoula, TransVisible Montana, and Kaleidoscope Kids. Learn more about United Way's work at MissoulaUnitedWay.org.

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