



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 20, 2020  
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## **Vulnerable Individuals and Families in Santa Barbara County Assisted through COVID-19 Joint Response Effort; also Supports Nonprofits Assisting Those Impacted by Virus**

### **“Those Who Can” Encouraged to Give Generously to Support Our Neighbors in Need**

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, CA –United Way of Santa Barbara County, The Santa Barbara Foundation and the Hutton Parker Foundation are leading a countywide funders’ collaborative, the COVID-19 Joint Response Effort for Santa Barbara County. The Effort will provide assistance to individuals and families as well as organizations actively assisting members of the community affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Over \$2 million has been secured and fundraising continues to help those most in need.

United Way is working in partnership with Family Service Agency to distribute individual assistance grants to individuals and families in need on a rolling basis for as long as funds are available. United Way and Family Service Agency are currently reviewing hundreds of applications and conducting remote interviews with all applicants to verify information and needs, and to provide case management services. The demand for these grants has been substantial, with more than 1,500 households seeking assistance.

Financial assistance checks from the COVID-19 Joint Response Effort are reaching families right now. Within the next two weeks, more than 800 households (representing more than 2,400 individuals) will receive grants from United Way totaling \$600,000 due to generous community support which has made this possible. Individual assistance grants will continue to be approved on a rolling basis as funds become available.

“While the long-term effects of the pandemic on our community are still evolving, we are clearly seeing the immediate economic toll of COVID-19 on our most vulnerable community members,” said Steve Ortiz, President & CEO, United Way of Santa Barbara County. “Tens of thousands of Santa Barbara County individuals and families who have lost employment are in desperate need of financial support



right now to pay rent, buy food and medicine. Any funds we receive for the Effort will go directly to those most in need.”

“Paying rent is the top concern of many local families and individuals,” said Ortiz. “Households are also having to make heartbreaking choices about buying food versus paying the bills or purchasing needed medications.”

Given the extraordinary demand from the community for help, which already well exceeds the total funding available at this time, United Way expects to conduct a second round of funding in the coming weeks, particularly as the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic begin to take effect. To do this, however, additional donations are needed from those fortunate enough to donate in these trying times.

The COVID-19 Joint Response Effort will align and coordinate efforts, collect and share information, and distribute financial resources on a rolling basis for our most vulnerable populations. To date, 46 local nonprofit organizations have received grants totaling \$695,468 to help them meet immediate community needs.

“Our combined approach to supporting both individuals/families as well as other nonprofits who are responding to COVID-19 allows us to address needs quickly and on multiple levels,” said Jackie Carrera, Interim CEO of the Santa Barbara Foundation.

Those who are fortunate enough to be able to give are encouraged to generously support the COVID-19 Joint Response Effort for Santa Barbara County. Donations to support individuals and families can be made at United Way at [unitedwaysb.org/covid19](https://unitedwaysb.org/covid19); or to support local nonprofits serving affected community members, donations can be made at the Santa Barbara Foundation at [SBFoundation.org/covid-19responseeffort](https://SBFoundation.org/covid-19responseeffort).

### **About United Way of Santa Barbara County**

United Way of Santa Barbara County (UWSBC) has the unique and positive vision that “in our community, everyone has a hopeful future.” Since 1923, UWSBC has served Santa Barbara County community through funding, volunteer development, and by utilizing its own unique initiatives that involve dozens of local nonprofit and public sector agencies. UWSBC’s local community driven Power of Partnership™ priorities help children, families and seniors with a focus on Education, Income and Health. To learn more, please visit [unitedwaysb.org](https://unitedwaysb.org).

### **About Santa Barbara Foundation**

The Santa Barbara Foundation, the largest community foundation in the region and the county’s go-to resource for investment and capacity-building, strives to mobilize and elevate all residents to thrive.



Nearly every Santa Barbara County nonprofit organization and essential community project has been supported by the Foundation during its 91-year history.

The Foundation is working to improve areas that affect quality of life in Santa Barbara County including childcare, workforce development, and workforce housing. The Foundation connects those who give with those in need - and all who dream of stronger communities. To learn more, please visit [SBFoundation.org](http://SBFoundation.org).

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