

# RESPONSE TO COVID-19

MARCH 16, 2020 - AUGUST 31, 2020



United Way  
of Buffalo & Erie County

Thanks to the contributions from donors, volunteers, and partnerships we have across the community, United Way of Buffalo & Erie County, as a designated essential service organization, has been able to nimbly and decisively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and address the new and urgent needs of our community.

## WNY COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE FUND

United Way is a member of the WNY Philanthropic Response Coordinating Workgroup. This group mobilized the generosity and wisdom of the philanthropic community to provide a coordinated and collaborative response targeting basic needs.

This work group created the WNY COVID-19 Community Response Fund. This collaborative philanthropic effort was led by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Health Foundation for Western & Central New York, The John R. Oishei Foundation, and United Way of Buffalo & Erie County.

Over \$7.5 million was raised from local foundations, private sector companies, community leaders and individuals. Of that over \$750,000 was generated from 1,800 donors through an online portal managed by United Way.



## FUNDING

The WNY COVID-19 Community Response Fund distributed over \$6.5 million in emergency funds through 156 grants made to nonprofits throughout WNY.

In addition, Erie County was selected to receive over \$553,000 in federal funds for Phase CARES (COVID-19 supplemental funds) through the Emergency Food and Shelter Grant program. United Way managed the release of these funds to seven local organizations on the front line of the pandemic.

## NONPROFIT RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

United Way of Buffalo & Erie County collaborated with community partners to establish resources and support for the nonprofit community, including:



The administration of a regional nonprofit survey on behalf of the philanthropic community within WNY. This survey provided vital data to help us identify the needs of service providers and ways in which we might respond;



Partnered with the WNY Nonprofit Support Group in assembling a comprehensive list of resources to help nonprofits navigate the COVID-19 pandemic;



Conducting listening sessions with our funded program partners to learn more about nonprofit needs and long-term challenges they may face in light of COVID-19.

## ADVOCACY

United Way actively engaged in advocacy efforts to include critical federal public policy funding in the March 2020 CARES ACT as well as future relief bills, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) emergency funding, funding to help child care centers remain open, continuation of 211 funding, creating a permanent charitable deduction, and funding for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA).



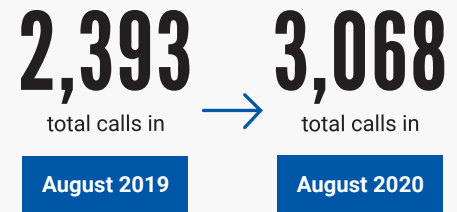
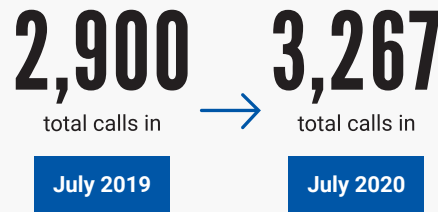
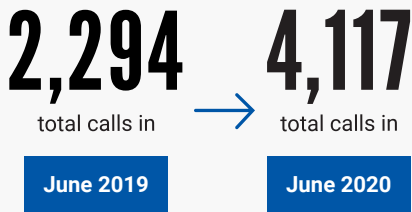
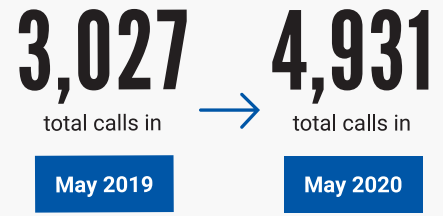
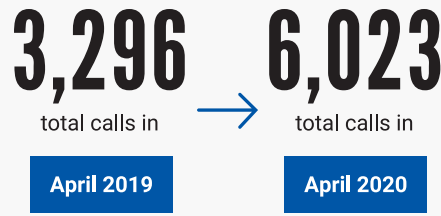
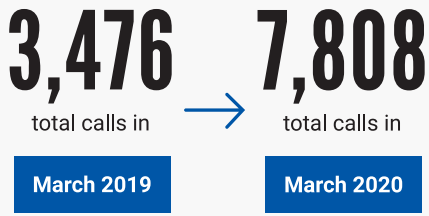
# 211WNY

211 is a free, confidential, 24/7/365 resource for all of WNY.

Dial 211 or 888-696-9211.  
Text your zip code to 898-211.  
Learn more at [211wny.org](http://211wny.org).



As a result of COVID-19, calls to 211 more than doubled in the first two months of the pandemic and they continue to outpace last year. The top three service request categories were **Low-Cost Housing & Shelter** assistance, locating **Free Tax Preparation Services**, and connecting individuals to **Government Services**. To help with the increase in calls, United Way brought in National Grid who supplied additional staff to help answer phones and ensure no call to 211 went unanswered.



# VOLUNTEERING

VolunteerWNY is your one-stop shop for anything and everything related to volunteerism in Western New York. Visit [volunteerwny.org](http://volunteerwny.org) to get started.



In partnership with [VolunteerWNY.org](http://VolunteerWNY.org), we worked with nonprofit partners to identify on-site/remote volunteer opportunities (compliant with CDC social distancing guidelines) and quickly made modifications to the website to accommodate the new volunteer demand and promote safe volunteering.



Coordinated the donation of over

**2,710**

homemade masks to local nonprofits to distribute to their staff and clients.

**361**

community members sent virtual thank you cards to essential workers with personalized notes through United Way's website. Submit yours today at [uwbec.org/thankyou](http://uwbec.org/thankyou).



**2,100**

volunteers were connected to nonprofit organizations through VolunteerWNY.org in response to COVID-19.