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United Way of Greater Los Angeles Names Grantees to Support L.A. County's Most Vulnerable During Coronavirus Response

Initial wave of funds awarded to four local organizations to aid unsheltered residents, low-income individuals and families at greater risk of homelessness and economic hardships

LOS ANGELES—The United Way of Greater Los Angeles **Pandemic Relief Fund** has made its first four grants to help Los Angeles's vulnerable communities stay healthy, secure and connected throughout the COVID19 crisis.

Only days after its announcement, the fund has already passed \$700,000, with generous commitments from the Blinkoff Corngold Charitable Fund, The California Wellness Foundation, Wells Fargo and anonymous donors. United Way is awarding the first wave of grants to trusted community-based organizations that serve the public directly so they may deliver critical services immediately.

“United Way has seen time and time again that people come together during an emergency and today is no different,” said Elise Buik, President and CEO of United Way of Greater Los Angeles. “As our communities with low-income working families face job losses, school closures, and health care challenges, and our homeless neighbors and partners face unprecedented challenges during the pandemic, now more than ever we need to support those in need. Thank you to our donors, corporate and foundation partners and community partners who are unified in support to combat this crisis with immediate relief efforts.”

Currently, an estimated 59,000 people are experiencing homelessness on any given night, without the ability to obtain consistent shelter or health care, and 1.7 million working families in L.A. struggle in poverty. To support L.A. County's unsheltered and sheltered residents who are especially vulnerable to the coronavirus, and low-income individuals, students and families at imminent risk of homelessness and hardships due to health and economic impacts of coronavirus, United Way is immediately awarding initial grants to four community organizations and will continue to raise and distribute funds that will help vulnerable Angelenos as we navigate this crisis.

The four initial grants include:

- **Inclusive Action for the City** will prevent growth in homelessness due to economic impacts of coronavirus to low-income individuals and families, supporting street vendors and other low-income entrepreneurs through targeted investments.

“Micro-businesses and low-wage workers like street vendors need support fast, and the best type of support is cash so they can pay their bills and put food on the table,” said Rudy Espinoza, Executive Director of Inclusive Action for the City. “I’m grateful that the United Way Pandemic Relief Fund recognizes that some hard working Angelenos will not be able to access federal, state or local resources like unemployment resources during this time. Their investment into a special fund we are creating with the LA Street Vendor Campaign will provide direct cash assistance to street vendors, many women and caretakers of children whose business has eroded because of COVID 19.”

- **Communities in Schools of Los Angeles** will support 1,000 students and their families in eleven Title I schools (the federal qualification for schools with large concentrations of low-income students) impacted by school closures and job layoffs resulting from the coronavirus. Using virtual case-management, they will connect families to learning and wellness resources in their neighborhoods and distribute self-care packets with basic hygiene and non-perishable food. Case management will support the social and emotional resilience of low-income students and their families while also helping them connect to the technology they need to keep learning.

“United Way of Greater Los Angeles has stepped up their support of Communities In Schools of Los Angeles with critical funding to ensure that our staff is able to stay connected with our families and address their broader needs,” said Elmer Roldan, executive director of Communities in Schools of Los Angeles. “Many of our families are not plugged into the District or other government communication systems. Even then, there’s hesitation to access those resources. CISLA is the conduit of information between families and District officials who are doing their very best given the rapidly changing environment.”

- **The People Concern** and **Special Service for Groups- Homeless Outreach Program Integrated Care System (SSG-HOPICS)**. Support to protect unsheltered residents and frontline organizations and individuals serving L.A.’s most vulnerable through this crisis is a key priority of the fund. These grants will allow these two community organizations to increase their capacities in this time of high need.

In addition to addressing housing, low-income workers and students, the fund will provide support to our non-profit partners in alignment with United Way's mission to break the cycle of poverty, that experience a decline in giving due to the pandemic and its impact on the economy and giving cycles.

Members of the public may donate at the link below to help those most vulnerable in this global coronavirus crisis.

<https://www.unitedwayla.org/en/give/pandemic-relief-fund/>

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United Way of Greater Los Angeles is a nonprofit organization fighting to end poverty by preparing students for high school graduation, college, and the workforce; housing our homeless neighbors; and guiding hard-working families towards economic mobility. United Way identifies the root causes of poverty and works strategically to solve them by building alliances across all sectors, funding targeted programs and advocating for change.