

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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While cloth masks hide our faces, the act of wearing them is like smiling since it shows that wearers care about the health and safety of others around them. Across Washington, your local United Ways are working to spread those smiles around to more faces.

In one of several COVID-19 assistance efforts, the [United Ways of the Pacific Northwest](#) is partnering with [Serve Washington](#) and the State of Washington Lt. Governor's Office in a [statewide homemade cloth mask-making challenge](#).

The challenge is designed to encourage everyone to wear some kind of cloth covering over the nose and mouth when out in public -- in accordance with recommendations by the [Center for Disease Control](#) and [State of Washington Department of Health](#).

United Ways are pairing organizations seeking cloth masks with volunteers who can make them. This activity is just one of the United Ways efforts to combat the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic

Jim Cooper, CEO of United Ways of the Pacific Northwest, observes that, "During times of uncertainty and crisis, people come together to support one another. COVID-19 is a new test of our collective strength. Feeding the kids, making the rent and keeping the lights on is tougher for many than ever before."

Since mid-March, Washington's local United Ways have created 15 special funds to meet their communities and families critical needs and raised and given out tens of millions of dollars. These local United Way COVID-19 funds have been done in collaboration with local foundations. For a map of these funds and links, go to [United Ways COVID-19 response](#)

United Ways have recruited and deployed volunteers to support food banks and other nonprofits whose services are crucial to people in need. They have also worked to support nonprofit partners by providing funding flexibility and helping secure resources like diapers and other health products. From Spokane to the Olympic Peninsula and Seattle to Walla Walla, United Ways are working overtime to help get their communities through this crisis and on the road to recovery.

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United Ways of the Pacific Northwest is standing with our communities and supporting those impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. UWPNW is the regional trade association for 29 local United Ways in Washington, Oregon and Idaho.