

# Give to the United Way

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The headquarters for United Way of King County, in downtown Seattle, pictured in June 2020. (AP Photo / Ted S. Warren, File)

By [The Seattle Times editorial board](#)

United Way of King County is one of the region’s most reliable and successful nonprofits. For nearly a century, it has helped keep vulnerable residents from falling through the cracks.

But United Way leaders haven’t stopped learning from the community they serve. Recently, they have been working to align programs with racial and economic justice principles and take lessons from changes brought by the pandemic.

United Way continues to earn donors’ trust and support.

“I want to be part of the solution,” said former Seattle Seahawks wide receiver Doug Baldwin Jr., chair of the 2021-2022 fundraising campaign. “As a young Black man living in the United States with two young daughters, I desperately want to see a change.”

The nonprofit is working to facilitate that change by being more intentionally guided by the people and communities it serves, said CEO Gordon McHenry Jr. For the past 18 months, United Way leaders have strengthened relationships with grassroots organizations to make meaningful investments in Black, brown and Indigenous communities. They are finalizing a new strategic plan, to be unveiled at the beginning of the year, that will center racial equity and collaboration.

“People want to be seen,” McHenry said. “People want to be heard.”

This focus on relationships and listening has inspired transformation of some longstanding services. McHenry points to a [successful partnership](#) with King County food banks and DoorDash to provide free weekly home grocery delivery. The shift has enabled the nonprofits to deliver culturally appropriate food, respect dietary needs and build relationships with families in need.

What started as a pandemic-era adaptation has become a lifeline for more than 5,000 households. More than 16,500 households have received rental assistance through the United Way and its community partners. Through these and other initiatives, United Way leaders are bringing renewed energy and broader reach to the organization’s vital work preventing homelessness, improving access to education and financial stability.

Their ultimate goal is to help create a more inclusive, equitable community where everyone belongs.

Readers can help by including United Way in their plans for holiday giving. Learn more and donate at [uwkc.org](https://uwkc.org)

***The Seattle Times editorial board*** members are editorial page editor Kate Riley, Frank A. Blethen, Luis Carrasco, Alex Fryer, Jennifer Hemmingsen, Mark Higgins, Derrick Nunnally and William K. Blethen (emeritus).

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