



# OUR NEIGHBOR FUND

Working side by side with communities to build an equitable future for everyone.



**Our neighbors are doing all they can to stay in their homes**, but the median rent for a studio apartment in King County is more than \$2,200 a month. With those high rents have come an increase in evictions as pandemic aid ended. And research has shown that half of families who are evicted experience homelessness within six months.

**KEEPING A FAMILY IN THEIR HOME SLOWS THE PIPELINE TO HOMELESSNESS.**



**IN 2023 ALONE, FOOD PRICES HAVE INCREASED**

**11.3%**



**Our neighbors are doing all they can to keep food on the table**, but grocery prices during the pandemic rose to their biggest increase in 50 years. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, annual food spending in the United States increased 70% from 1997 to 2022, even after adjusting for inflation. The USDA said that total food prices rose almost 10% in 2022 alone—more than three times the average over the previous 20-years (2003-2022).

**United Way of King County is well positioned to help our neighbors:** They turned to us, and we responded. Using federal COVID relief dollars, United Way created King County's rental assistance response in partnership with our nonprofit and community partners and processed more than \$200 million in rental assistance funding. We created a system by which landlords accepted back rent along with an agreement not to evict for six months. Landlords also accepted a waiver of all fees associated with late rent. During 2023, we distributed about \$1 million a week in rental assistance.

United Way created a Home Grocery Delivery Program that, at its peak, served 6,700 families per week. Currently, we serve 4,000 families. United Way also formed partnerships with emergency food providers of color to launch the Food Justice Collaborative, which tackles systemic changes in the state's emergency food system.

**But we need your help.** Most of the federal dollars that addressed the housing and food crises during the pandemic are gone. As rents continue to skyrocket in the region, more than 13,000 households have signed up for United Way of King County's rental assistance waiting list, with more than 1,200 joining each month. Due to funding disparities, about 1,000 households lost their home grocery deliveries last year. The waiting list for home grocery deliveries is now the highest in the program's history.

## Our Neighbor Fund

We know what happens when we provide families with the support they need to stabilize their lives. In 2021, federal assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic, lowered the childhood poverty rate to 5.2%, its lowest mark on record.

Since then, federal support has ceased, and the childhood poverty rate has more than doubled. We need to recapture the momentum that lifted millions of our neighbors out of poverty. We **MUST** significantly increase the amount of food and housing assistance available.

That's why United Way is excited to announce **Our Neighbor Fund**. We're raising \$12.5 million to invest in strategies that will feed kids and families and keep them in their homes in the coming year.

Our Neighbor Fund will allow us to work towards:

- Expanding our Home Grocery program to provide **5,000** families with free groceries each week.
- Helping 100 additional schools in King County implement Breakfast After the Bell, impacting **49,000** students.
- Leveraging **millions** in rental assistance funding.
- Providing an additional **920** families the support they need to stay in their homes.

As we continue to pass legislation that will change the systems that create these needs, it is critical we're meeting our neighbors' immediate needs now.



**Please make a gift to Our Neighbor Fund so we can serve more of our neighbors.**