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**United Way
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United Way is investing \$1.5 million into Snohomish County

United Way of Snohomish County is excited to announce it will invest \$1.5 million into the community through five CORE (Creating Open Roads to Equity) Collaboratives and 18 Basic Needs grants beginning in January 2018. This news is the culmination of 10 months of community conversations; volunteers working to redesign the way United Way partners; and a comprehensive, multi-faceted grant application process.

In May of 2017, United Way's board of directors approved an innovative investment strategy based on two very promising national models—a 2-Generational Approach and Collective Impact. Additionally, the organization narrowed its focus to seek community approaches and programs for young children (prenatal to age 8) and their families with low income.

The 2-Generational Approach provides opportunities for—and meets the needs of—children and their families, together. It concentrates on five focus areas including early childhood education, postsecondary and employment pathways, building economic assets, health and well-being, and creating community connections. Collective Impact is about bringing partners together to significantly shift the needle on social issues through intentional, measurable collaboration.

“Combining these two approaches fundamentally changes the conversation for our families, community partners, and investors because it focuses on long-term solutions in addition to short-term responses,” said United Way of Snohomish County President and CEO, Allison Warren-Barbour.

After receiving input from community partners on new grant funding guidelines, United Way released a Request of Proposal (RFP) in June. Included in this RFP were two funding opportunities that reflected the organization's priorities: 1) intentional Collaboratives (minimum of five cross-sector partners with shared impact plans) focused on long-term outcomes for children birth to age 8 and their families with low income and 2) single programs that provide basic need services and/or access to services like housing, food, and healthcare. Leading up to this announcement, United Way provided planning grants to groups interested in exploring a collaborative, systems-oriented approach to placing families at the center of a service delivery.

“Thanks to United Way donors and corporate partners, over \$1 million will be invested into CORE Collaboratives and a half a million will be allocated to Basic Needs grants,” said Lark

Kesterke, Director of Impact and Investments. “We received 26 CORE Collaborative proposals and 45 Basic Needs proposals, which speaks to the tremendous spirit of collaboration in our county and innovative ideas that accompany it.”

Between the CORE Collaboratives and Basic Needs grants, this investment will cover all of Snohomish County.

United Way volunteers, which included parents with young children and local experts in the areas of early childhood education, mental health, post-secondary education, employment, and housing, along with United Way staff, participated in numerous deliberation sessions, in-person meet & greets, financial statement reviews, and executive leadership calls. Using this comprehensive approach provided volunteers multiple data sets to consider while making their final investment decisions.

“It was inspiring to come to the office during deliberations and have children present in our halls. The most valuable voice in this work are the families we hope to serve,” said Warren-Barbour.

In November, United Way’s board of directors culminated this tremendous effort by awarding five Collaborative projects with up to \$210,000 annually over the next three years (2018-2020) and 18 Basic Needs programs with up to \$50,000 for the 2018 calendar year.

Funded Collaborative projects include: Casino Road Opportunity for All Collaborative (led by the YMCA); Homeward House (led by the YWCA); Increasing School Attendance (led by Housing Hope); Making Life Work (led by the Stanwood-Camano Area Foundation); and the North Counties’ Community Collaborative (led by the North Counties’ Family Services).

Funded Basic Needs grants included programs offered by the following agencies: Domestic Violence Services of Snohomish County, Volunteers of America Western Washington, Hand in Hand, the YWCA Seattle | King | Snohomish, Housing Hope, Northshore Youth and Family Services, WithinReach, Stanwood Camano Food Bank, Packs for Kids – Washington, Kinderling Center, Interfaith Association of Western Washington, and Village Community Services.

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United Way of Snohomish County is moving beyond its traditional role of simply being a fundraiser to being a funder, partner, convener, and catalyst for positive, lasting community change. We work with a network of nonprofits, businesses, government, and community leaders to build resources, focus investments, and foster partnerships to move families with young children out of the traps of poverty and toward success. To learn more, visit www.uwsc.org.